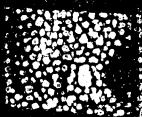
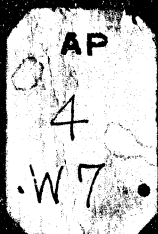


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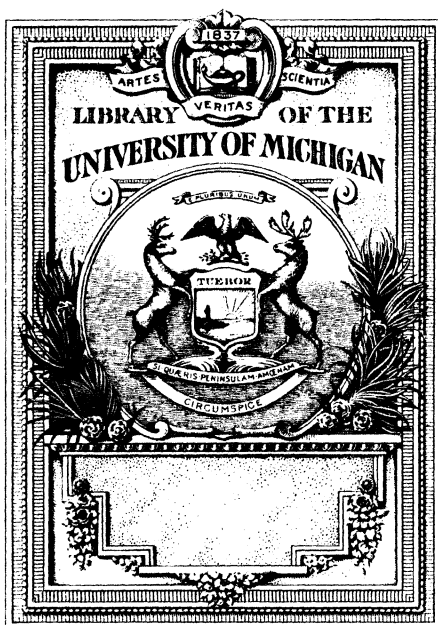
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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY
FOR MEN AND WOMEN

VOL. LVIII
JUNE TO NOVEMBER 1923

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Monday's child is fair of face
Tuesday's child is full of grace
Wednesday's child is full of woe
Thursday's child has far to go
Friday's child is loving & giving
Saturday's child works hard
 for her living
 But the child that is born on
 the Sabbath Day
 Is bonny & blithe & good & gay.

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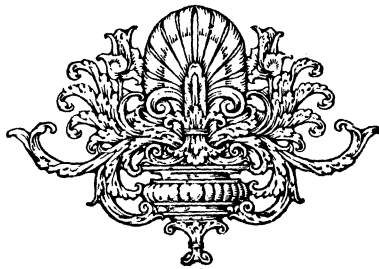
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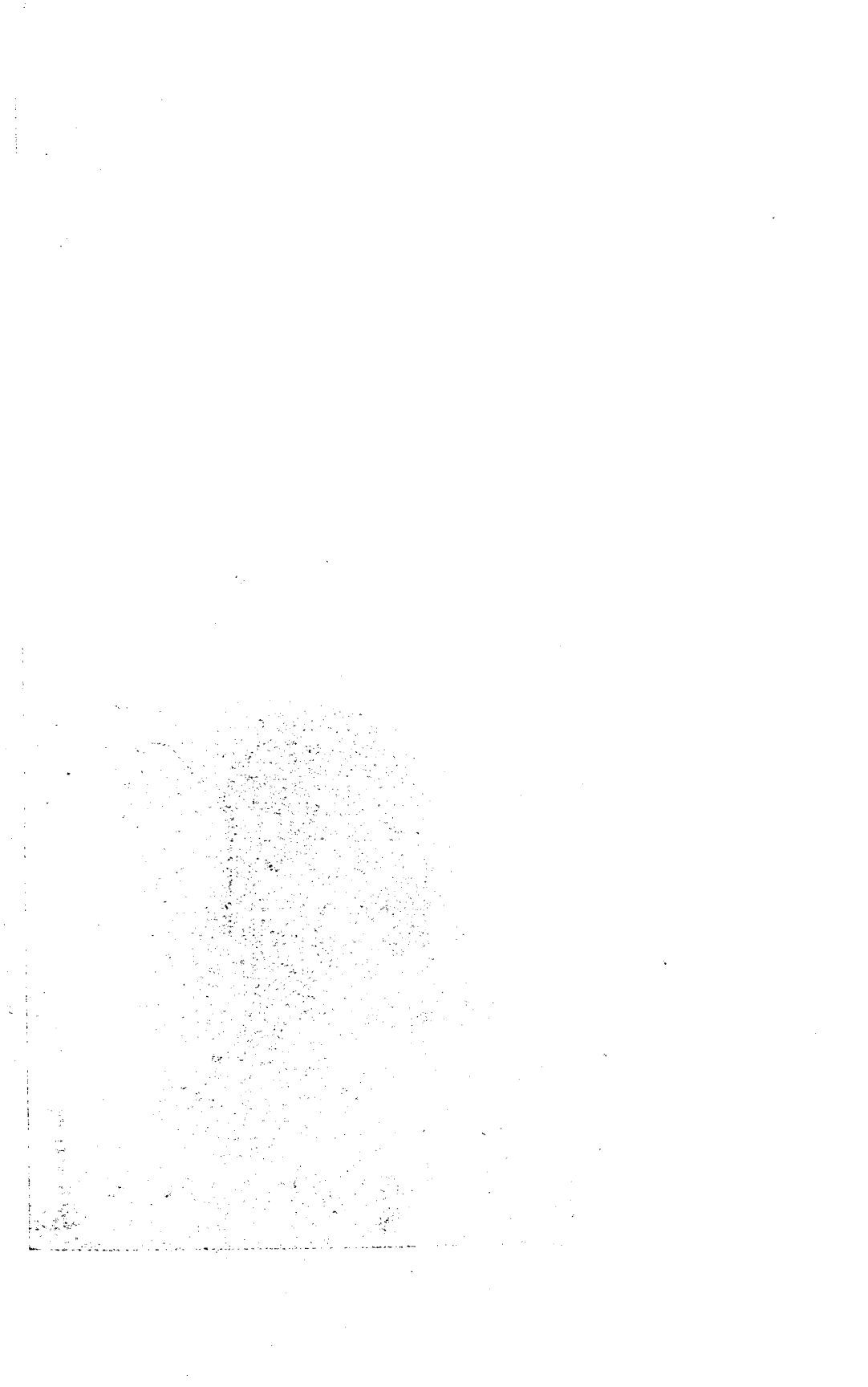
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GREEN PASTURES AND STILL WATERS. BY THE LATE B. W. LEADER, R.A.

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"He wanted to get back to her and marry her. There seems to be no way of getting there except by hiring a little yacht of some kind."

OTHERWISE

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

IT was a sultry August afternoon, and the Reeds' party sat upon the shaded terrace of the Imperial Hotel at Deep-sea, drowsing or talking fitfully. Lady Lydia, who was least asleep, excused the incoherence of the conversation by saying that "the words melt before they are out of your mouth." The Extra Turn half opened his eyes and nodded when she said that.

"Yes, melted!" he murmured, and closed his eyes again.

The Extra Turn, as the Reeds called him between themselves, was not of the original party, but "adventitious" (Mr. Reed), or "an accretion" (Uncle Thompson). The party and he had made acquaintance principally because neither they nor he had

set out to do so. The Reeds were very exclusive, and they would promptly have snubbed overtures from an outsider, a man whose money was made out of a number of shops (of which he was not ashamed). But he made no overtures. So they did not feel precluded from casual acquaintanceship. Mr. Reed noticed that he knocked up a forty break at billiards, playing the marker, and played him himself. Mrs. Reed observed that "that man really can play auction." So they invited him to join in when they were one short. Ryder Austin watched him sail a boat single-handed in a big wind, and talked boating with him. Uncle Thompson (Mrs. Reed's brother) judged him the only worthy opponent at golf. The Reed boys

and girls admired the way he brought down coconuts at the fair, and thought him "a sport" to offer to play the piano while they jazzed, when the hotel pianist was sick. So they chatted to him afterwards. Lady Lydia—she was the Reed girls' second cousin, a few years older than they—noticed that he did not seem to notice her (she was mistaken), and decided that he ought to be taught a lesson in the value of knowledge. She was a capricious (and perhaps a trifle vain) lady, who did not want men so much as she wanted them to want her; a modern, self-supporting lady who wrote as Eve New, and wasn't so very different from the Eve of old. So she contrived that he *had* to take notice of her.

The Extra Turn—his name was Henry Jagers—was also exclusive in his way. He had found that people who tried to know him usually wanted something out of him; if they were ladies, sometimes wanted to marry him. He considered that a man who married before forty usually made a mistake, and a man who married after forty always made one; and he was thirty-nine and a half. Tallish and cleverish and stoutish and squarish and strong. Since the party made no deliberate advances upon him, he did not obstruct Nature's working toward a gradual acquaintance.

At the end of ten days—his time was up in four more—he had become almost a member of "The Reeds' lot," so fully a member that he and Lady Lydia had discussed "life and its limitations," "the right to bachelordom," "the disappearance of sentiment and the effect upon futurity," and other puzzles which (before sentiment disappeared) had long been held to require solution by a ring upon the lady's finger. They were not ignorant of this solution, but they considered it a "cook" rather than a mate, as chess-players say. They had concluded (separately) that such an obvious solution was not desirable in the present case.

The reasons for their conclusions—as is often the case with men and women—were exactly opposite to the principles for which they had respectively contended in their discussions. He considered that Lady Lydia was "in another sphere." (He always argued that social distinctions were entirely out of date.) She considered that he "hadn't the necessary dash of sentiment." (She always contended that sentiment was obsolete), and was "bit too clever." (She

always tried to convince him that he was a fool.)

Anyhow, they had concluded; and they were a pair of pig-headed people—at least, he was one, and she would have been, if the word could be applied (of course it cannot be) to a very charming lady. So their conclusions would probably have stood for all time—so much of it as concerned them—but for the arrival of a slouching, rather furtive-eyed sailorman upon the terrace that afternoon.

He glanced round to see that the hotel attendants were not at his heels, wiped his mouth reminiscently with his cuff, and tried to bow with dignity—at any rate, bobbed.

"Excuse me, ladies and gen'lemen," he began, "but if I might have a word with you? Little thing here you might find interestin'."

He tapped his coat over his heart, but presumably referred only to his pocket.

"Eh?" cried Mr. Reed. "What?"

He took the handkerchief off his face and regarded the intruder with obvious disfavor.

"Give him something and get him to go," Mrs. Reed muttered. "I want to sleep," she yawned.

"No harm in having a look, lady," the sailorman said persuasively. "It ain't anything ornerary. There's a fortune in it—a fortune, ladies and gen'lemen."

He nodded all round to everybody.

"A bloomin' fortune!" he repeated with conviction.

"Don't want one," Tom Reed stated, with a yawn. "Hop it, my man!"

"You'd be sorry afterwards," the sailorman declared, "if you ever came to know what you'd missed."

"Shan't know," murmured Ryder Austin. "What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't trouble over. Here's a tanner. Now get a move on."

The man looked round again from one to the other of the party for some sign of interest, but they shut their eyes and shook their heads.

"Chance of a lifetime," the man declared. "Only wants the money to fit out a craft and go for it. Waiting there for anyone. Makes me desperate when I think of it. . . . Desperate. . . . Give a chap a chance—half a chance, ladies and gen'lemen."

"Oh," Lady Lydia implored the Extra Turn, who sat nearest to her, "do give him

something to go ! I'm *so* drowsy. I was just going off."

The Extra Turn looked at the sailor keenly, then back to Lady Lydia.

"Don't you think," he asked, "you might hear something worth putting in one of your books ?"

"You evidently don't read them," she grumbled. "I don't go in for that sort of thing. Only character—or otherwise ! . . . You may as well let him tell the yarn now. You've woke me up, between you !"

The Extra Turn beckoned to the sailor.

"Now, take a fair warning first, my friend," he advised. "If it's anything in the confidence line, you'll run a big risk. I'm the sort of person that it isn't safe to try tricks on. Now, will you take a shilling and go, or stay and take your risk ?"

"I'm not backing out," the man told him. "I don't propose to take money down for it, but to go with the party that goes after it. You'd have your hand on me. Only want someone to pay the exes ; advance a bit—what I haven't got—for the boat and all that—exes to be the first claim on it when found. It's treasure. That's what it is. Hid by a pirate chap years ago. Name of Kidd. Heard of him ?"

"I've heard a lot of kid in my time," the Extra Turn said.

The sleepers woke completely and laughed. Some of them sat up and rubbed their eyes.

"Dare say," the man agreed, "dare say ; and it sounds like kid. Granted. But it ain't. I'm not that sort. It's buried in an island. Not so far from Vantos. Know that ?"

"Do you ?" the Extra Turn queried.

"Where I got this plan." He pulled a dirty piece of folded paper out of his pocket. "Know Vantos inside and out."

"Do you ?" said the Extra Turn. "Well, as a matter of fact, so do I, my friend. What faces the pier ?"

The man laughed hoarsely.

"Nothing. No pier !"

"Right. There's a quay, though. What's that like ?"

"Hard earth, just a row or two of planks along the edge, and wooden piles and planks to hold it up. Given to sliding after the hot weather. But a bit to the left—by the toll house—is rock, and a scrap of stony beach below it at low tide. About a couple of dozen houses faces you. The wine-shop has the name of Carraros over the top.

That ain't the name of the people who keep it, though."

"It was in my time."

"Ten year ago, then. Next to the wine-shop—let me see—"

"That's all right. You know Vantos. Is the treasure there ?"

"No, or it 'ud be here now, where I was. It's in an island—you won't expect the name yet, or until we come to terms—a little island a couple of hundred miles off. I can't get there. No passenger or trade boats running. No money to hire one. Couldn't trust the people if I *was* there, or I'd work my passage back to Vantos—I could get *there* all right—and go on. The other place is where I can't get to. That's where I want someone to fit out a boat for. Three months I've been trying to find a way, and can't, and feeling desperate . . ."

"Have you ever been to the island ?" the Extra Turn inquired.

"Shipwrecked there. Took off after two months. Why didn't I nab the treasure then, you'll say ? Didn't know it was there, not then. Now I do. . . . Fair desperate . . . You could take off the expenses, and give me a quarter of what's left. Do for me."

"How did you come by the plan ?"

"That's telling, but I'll satisfy you before we go. I go with the expedition, mind. That's a condition. Here's the plan. The bit tore off the top is where the name was. I've got it, and I'll show you if we come to terms. Not giving away nothing for nothing, in course. See the plan ?" He opened the dirty paper upon the Extra Turn's knee. "Drewed a hundred or two years ago ; but the place hasn't altered much, except for a settlement that collects some stuff or something that's fetched away every two years ; three families, about fourteen of 'em all told. The collecting ship will be due in about eighteen months, and I might get taken in her, but grow desperate if I have to wait till then."

"You said," the Extra Turn observed, "that you *had* grown desperate. I rather think you have. Anyhow, you're running a desperate man's risk. If I hand you over to the law—"

"What the—what yer mean ? I haven't said nothing that won't be proved, if you take me there. What yer looking like that for ? Spit it out, guv'nor !"

"What do I mean ?" said the Extra Turn. "Why, that you need much bigger fools for the swindle ! This plan wasn't made out a hundred or two years ago, or

ten." He tossed it back to the man. "I know a good deal about paper. This particular kind has only been made for a few years. If you're not out of this in half a minute, I shall send for the police."

The man put the "plan" in his pocket, turned away, went without a word.

"I don't know,"

the Extra Turn told Lady Lydia, "whether he'll be any use to you as a character, but he might do for an otherwise."

"If you hadn't known all about paper——" Mrs. Reed cried.

"I don't," said the Extra Turn. "It was pure bluff! But it out-bluffed him!"

"Two otherwises!" Tom Reed suggested. "Note that, Lyd!"

* * * * *

"What he didn't see," Lady Lydia told the circle that evening—the Extra Turn had gone out "on his own"—"is that the man *must* have been desperate to make up a wild plan like that and to risk being sent to



"The man put the 'plan' in his pocket, turned away."

prison. He must have realised that it was twenty to one that he would be found out. What credible story could he tell to account for having the plan? I mean for acquiring it in any way that would make us believe it was genuine? He *was* desperate. I watched his face, especially when he

turned away. I never saw anyone or anything—not even a dog—look so woe-begone in my life. I can see him now. We ought to have asked him why he did it. It may have been for a sick wife, or a sick child, or—anything! Mr. Jaggers looked upon him just as a ‘character,’ but——”

“An ‘otherwise,’” Tom Reed corrected.

“Suppose,” Lady Lydia wanted to know, “that *you* had a sick wife——”

“If you’d been a bit younger,” said Tom, “and were sick——”

“Of *you*!” she cried. “Any girl soon would be! You great grinning ape! Well, I didn’t look upon him as a character—or an otherwise—but as a *man*! A man desperate through trouble. I want to find out what



“If you’re not out of this in half a minute, I shall send for the police.”

he was desperate about and perhaps help him."

"Yes!" cried the Reed girls in one breath.

"Let's form ourselves into an association for the succour of the Otherwise," Jack Reed proposed. "We'll track the bounder down to-morrow and get his story out of him. Yes, old Jagers was a bit hard on the beggar. He is a bit hard. I suppose that's how he made his pot. Otherwise——"

"That's what I shall call him!" Lady Lydia cried. "Otherwise!"

Mr. Reed Senior looked up over the evening paper and grunted.

"As near a thing as that," he commented.

"Get one of my own generation to repeat it," Lady Lydia stormed. "I can say what I think of *him*! Oh, you old coward! To shelter behind a gouty toe and a pot and grey hairs!"

"And me!" said Mrs. Reed. "I'll endorse the remark. You might do worse, you know, Lydia."

"She's done her best!" Agnes Reed giggled. "He's a wary old bird. *Otherwise*——"

"It is a sad thing," Lady Lydia observed, "to be connected, even distantly, with such a family! However, you're not so hard-hearted as you make out. Who's President of the Association for the Succour of the 'Otherwise'?"

"You!" they chorused.

"Whichever one you mean," Mrs. Reed added.

* * * * *

Lady Lydia was exceedingly cool to the Extra Turn the next day; refused tennis or a sail; had "important business," she said. She occupied herself, in partnership with her cousins, in seeking the sailorman.

Late in the day, after many inquiries, they tracked him so far as a common lodging-house, but they found that he had left the town in the afternoon.

"What's he been and gone and done?" the woman who looked after the lodging-house wanted to know.

"Why do you suspect that he's 'gone and done' anything?" Lady Lydia demanded.

The woman shrugged her shoulders.

"You ain't the only ones that's been after him," she stated, "not by no means. There was a gent that came last night—could tell him for a 'tec with half an eye—and had a talk with him in his cubicle.

Couldn't help hearing a few things. Them wooden partitions ain't over-thick, and an opening at the top of the doors——"

"I suppose you listened in the passage?" Lady Lydia accused her.

"Well, *you'd* know! My business to see what kind of blokes are lodging here, ain't it? Don't know that it's yours!" (Tom Reed gave her half-a-crown at this point, and she became greatly mollified.) "Howsomever, no offence meant and none taken. Warning him to leg it, I take it the 'tec was; trouble over some faked plan of something that he'd been trying to sell to a mug. 'So it was all lies?' the 'tec says; and he says 'Yus.' And then there was a shine between two of the reg'lars, old Miles and the Blind Man. The one that stands by the pier. And he got a neye bunged up, but not the one he can see with. Lucky for him! I had to go and get my man to part 'em, and I lost a lot of the talk, but I heard the 'tec say as he'd got to be off by the 2.8 this afternoon; and let his doss according. And he went off about a quarter to two and made no fuss; nor with the 'tec, neither, though I thought there was going to be a rumpus when he first came in. But *he* could look after himself. I know *his* sort—great strong chap!"

"What sort?" Tom Reed inquired.

"Oh, a middlin' big man; near as tall as you, but stouter; might be forty. Wore a dark serge suit, and a dark blue hat, and a tie pin with a horse's head; clean-shaven, and a stall on his left hand little finger. Know the bloke?"

"Oh!" Lady Lydia gasped. "Oh, it's——"

"Otherwise!" said Jack Reed.

"He needn't have bullied the poor man and driven him away," Agnes Reed bewailed.

"The brute!" cried Nellie Thompson.

"I detest him," said Lady Lydia, "and, what's more, I'll show it! He hasn't an ounce of feeling in him."

"Otherwise——" Tom Reed began.

"Oh," said Jack Reed, "shut up! Lyd's in a sufficient wax!"

"I'll show him what I think of him," Lady Lydia reasserted.

* * * * *

You can't show detestation of a person who doesn't approach you, and the Extra Turn didn't try to talk to Lady Lydia that evening—apparently detected disfavour

afar. He played billiards with Mr. Reed, and mentioned over the game that he was leaving the next day, two days earlier than his original date. So at half-past ten Lady Lydia was still bubbling over with unshown detestation, and she heard that the object of detestation was leaving in the morning, quite early—before she was likely to be up to show it.

She set her two pretty rows of teeth and clenched her two dainty hands.

"Tom," she told her cousin, "I *will* speak to him and tell him what I think!"

"Don't be an ass, Lyd," Tom advised. "It won't do him any good."

"It will do *me* good," she stated, and walked over to the detested person with her head in the air.

"I wanted to speak to you about something, Mr. Jaggers," she said.

"Certainly," he agreed. "Here? Or shall we walk out on the terrace?"

"The terrace," she decided. "I am very angry and annoyed, and I expect I shall look it. But, if *you* don't care, I don't care!"

"Anyhow," he said, "you'd better put on a jacket or a wrap. Otherwise——"

"Never dare say that word to me again," she stormed. "It is about that poor man whom you called an 'otherwise.'"

"Oh!" he said. "Oh! But I'll fetch your woolly thing off the pegs. I know it."

He fetched "the woolly thing." They walked out on the terrace.

"Why did you hound him out of the town," she demanded, "that poor, desperate man?"

"How do you know I did?" he inquired.

"Because we saw that he was in great trouble—desperate, as he said—and went to the place where he lodged to see if we could help him. It was I who suggested it, if you care to know, and——"

"I am very glad to know it, Lady Lydia," he said, "very glad!"

"You!" she cried. "You—are—glad!" He bowed. "You, who sent him away from our aid; never asked about his trouble, of course! Never cared! Now I suppose we shall *never* know what it was, and——"

"I can tell you," he offered. "It appears that when he was shipwrecked on the little island, he took a fancy to one of the settler girls, or, rather, after he had left the place he found out that he had. He wanted to get back to her and marry her. There seems to be no way of getting there except by hiring a little yacht of

some kind. He hadn't the money to do it. So he made up his yarn just to get to the girl, and chanced what would happen to him afterwards. All things are fair in love and war, eh?"

"Perhaps the girl is waiting and waiting and wanting him, and wondering——"

"That," said the Extra Turn, "was his idea."

"What business had you to punish him?" she raged. "To punish him for being a good lover? If you hadn't driven him away, we would have helped him to go to her. We . . ."

The Extra Turn laughed suddenly.

"God bless you!" he said warmly. "I—I noticed the poor devil's face when he went away, you see. . . ."

Lady Lydia seized his sleeve.

"You!" she said. "You! *Have* you sent him to her?"

He nodded.

"Yes," he said. "Yes, I've sent him to her. Probably he'll blame me some day, or she will! Really, *you* ought to take the blame or credit. I don't suppose I should have done it before I met you. Mightn't have realised that a woman can mean a good deal to a man, even though she shows him plainly that she regards him as 'out of it' . . . If you care to know, that is why I am leaving here."

"Oh-h! Out of *what*?"

"Out of it with *you*. Otherwise——"

Lady Lydia stamped her foot.

"Never you dare use that horrid word to me again!"

"Regard it as unsaid," he requested.

"But you said something else," she charged him.

"Out of it with you," he repeated stubbornly.

Lady Lydia gazed thoughtfully at the grounds with the moonlight over them.

"The moon," she observed, "looks so near! As if it were only at the end of the avenue."

"Umph! I wasn't speaking of the moon. Only that I had no prospect of a honey-moon!"

"Honey—or otherwise!" Lady Lydia commented. "As a matter of fact, I'm not all honey, and I shouldn't think you were. But we've both shown up rather decently over this, haven't we? As another matter of fact, you said that you were—what was the exact foolish expression that you *did* use?"

"That I was 'out of it,' with you."

"Yes! *And are you?*"

"Lydia!"

"No, no. They may be watching us out of the windows!"

"Come and look for the moon, then, dear lady!"

They passed into the shelter of the avenue, and the family came away from the windows

of the drawing-room and settled down to Auction.

"And that's that!" said Uncle Thompson, with a sigh of relief. "I hope she'll let him play golf to-morrow."

"Ring for Peter, Jack," Mr. Reed commanded. "We'll have some champagne and drink to Lydia and Otherwise!"

CAGED.

CAGED LINNET:

HOW is it with the trees?
How is it with the air?

LINNET FROM THE WOOD:

They're talking to the breeze.
White cherry blossom's there,
And flies are whirling fast.
Each evening comes more slow;
The brook is swirling past.

CAGED LINNET:

I didn't know.

LINNET FROM THE WOOD:

There's a green shoot or two
On every beechen bough.
The woodside shines with blue;
The chaff-chaff's building now;
The warbler's here again,
And whitethroats come and go.
I'm nesting in yon lane.

CAGED LINNET:

I didn't know.

LINNET FROM THE WOOD:

Do they give you drink?
Do they give you seeds?

CAGED LINNET:

Yes, and this they think
Is all a linnet needs.
But I'm dreaming of the rutways filled with rain,
Of the grasses where moon-daisies wax and wane.
I'm dreaming of the nights and days
When I was there.
I'm weary for the woodland ways,
I'm lovesick for the—*air*.

FAY INCHFAWN,

Author of "Homely Verses of a Home-Lover,"

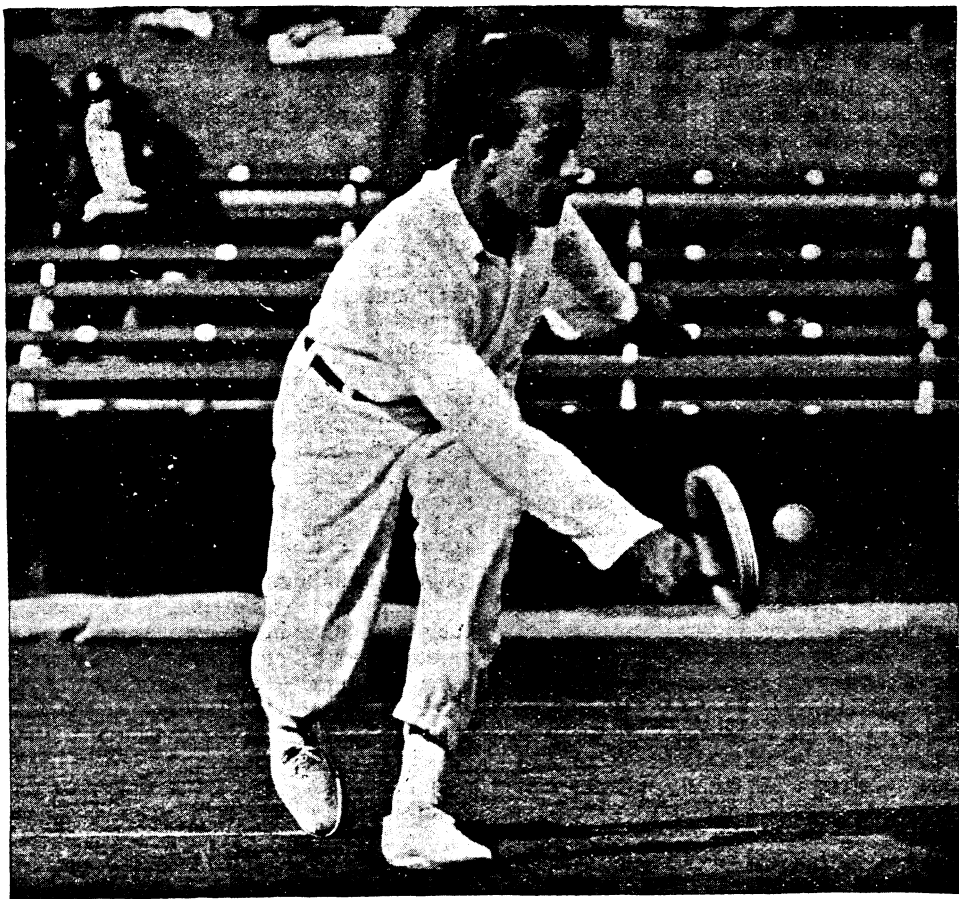


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HENRI COCHET.

[Sport & General.

LAWN TENNIS EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS

By HENRI COCHET,

Champion of France; Hard Court and Covered Court Champion of the World, 1922.

ALTHOUGH I am only now just over twenty years old, I made my *début* at lawn tennis a long time ago—nearly fourteen years. My father being then manager of the Lyons Lawn Tennis Club, I was, in a sort of way, brought up in a tennis atmosphere. At the age of six I was very fond of watching tennis matches, and if the play was good, my greatest pleasure was to act as ball-boy in order to watch the game better. The last player had

no sooner left the club than I was picking any old racket and ball I could find, and was playing against the wall. It is difficult to tell how many hours I spent before the wall. In fact, every day when coming home from school I was running as quickly as I could, wanting to lose no time before starting to play.

I insist on this wall practice, which I consider the best way to learn strokes. The wall is a wonderful opponent—always

there ready to send you back the ball. Playing against the wall, there is no desire to win; one has only in view to learn and improve. And it is possible to study any stroke in the game; one can play hard or soft, learn even to smash and volley. Playing close to the wall is a wonderful training for quick volleying. If one hits hard, the ball comes back much faster than it does on a lawn tennis court, therefore one learns to be always ready and improves one's foot-work. Having to hit the ball in every position, one acquires quickly a great steadiness.

To support my theory of the great benefit of wall practice, I will recall that a winter of such training helped Wilding to learn and develop a new backhand stroke, and made it possible for him to reach championship honours.

It was only two years later that I was allowed to play on the tennis courts one afternoon every week with my school friends. I was so keen on the game that I improved very quickly, and became soon the best youngster in Lyons.

Once a year our club was holding a big international tournament, in which many famous players were taking part. I had thus the great fortune of admiring Wilding, R. N. Williams, Kleinschroth, Germot, Count Soehn. In these days nothing seemed to me more wonderful than a tennis champion, and my secret ambition was to become myself a great tennis player. During this tournament I was watching every match, never missing an opportunity to study and learn the game. Although I never consciously tried to copy the strokes of the big champions, in comparing their different methods I built my own style and conception of the game.

Then the War came and stopped tennis altogether. The French Army took possession of the Tennis Club, and big motor-lorries soon destroyed and smashed our three covered courts and ten hard courts. The club reopened its doors five years later, and in July, 1919, I was able to take a racket again. In 1920 I entered for the local championship and won it for the first time. This first success induced me to take part in open competitions. I was then improving so quickly, as a consequence of my wall practice, that I was beginning to hope that one day I should be able to fulfil my childhood's ambitions and be like the champions I was admiring so much. I played only in small open tournaments in Lyons this year,

and was undefeated. In the beginning of 1921 I entered the second-class covered court championship of France, which I won, defeating my friend Borotra in the final round. This was to be between us the beginning of a series of hard-fought matches, which I have so far been lucky enough to win.

Although this first success pleased me very much, I had still another ambition. I must here explain to my readers that in France the players are ranked in three classes. Only the first class players are allowed to play in the proper championship, and are chosen to represent their country in international competitions. To pass into the first class one has to win the second-class championship or "Criterium," and defeat some first-class players. Winning the "Criterium" is, therefore, every young player's ambition. The keen rivalry and competition for this desired title are one of the great factors in the actual improvement amongst our rising champions. I won in June the hard court "Criterium," again defeating Borotra in five sets in the final round. After this match the French Lawn Tennis Association ranked us in the first class.

In September, 1921, I was chosen to play number one against Belgium, and won all my matches. In February, 1922, I was sent to St. Moritz, in Switzerland, to compete in the World's Covered Court Championship. I had a very lucky draw, and, owing to the illness of Laurentz, I easily arrived in the final round against Borotra, who had survived, after hard matches, from a half which included Brugnon, Decugis, Morpurgo, and Dupont.

I never was so near to losing against Borotra, being at one moment two sets down, four games to two and forty-fifteen. I think my opponent's perpetual incursions to the net must have exhausted him. Anyhow, the great confidence that my previous victories had given me enabled me to attack at this critical moment and win the two last sets easily.

I had then met only French players, and I decided to go to the South of France to meet players of a different type. I found that the peculiarly light and slippery grounds of the Riviera courts are a big handicap against the volleyer. I played in three tournaments, and although defeated by Count Soumarokoff—one of the finest players I have ever met—I improved my game greatly in meeting some very steady English base-liners.

In June I was sent to Brussels to represent France in the World's Hard Court Championship. I did not think much of my chances when I learned that I had to meet Manuel Alonso in the fourth round. Alonso had been in excellent form before, and was very much fancied as the ultimate winner. I

than Alonso. I started very well, winning six love the first set, then must have relaxed, and lost the next two. It was very hot, and I was feeling tired and disheartened, when one of the spectators cried to me: "Go on! Your opponent is more tired than you." This gave me back courage.

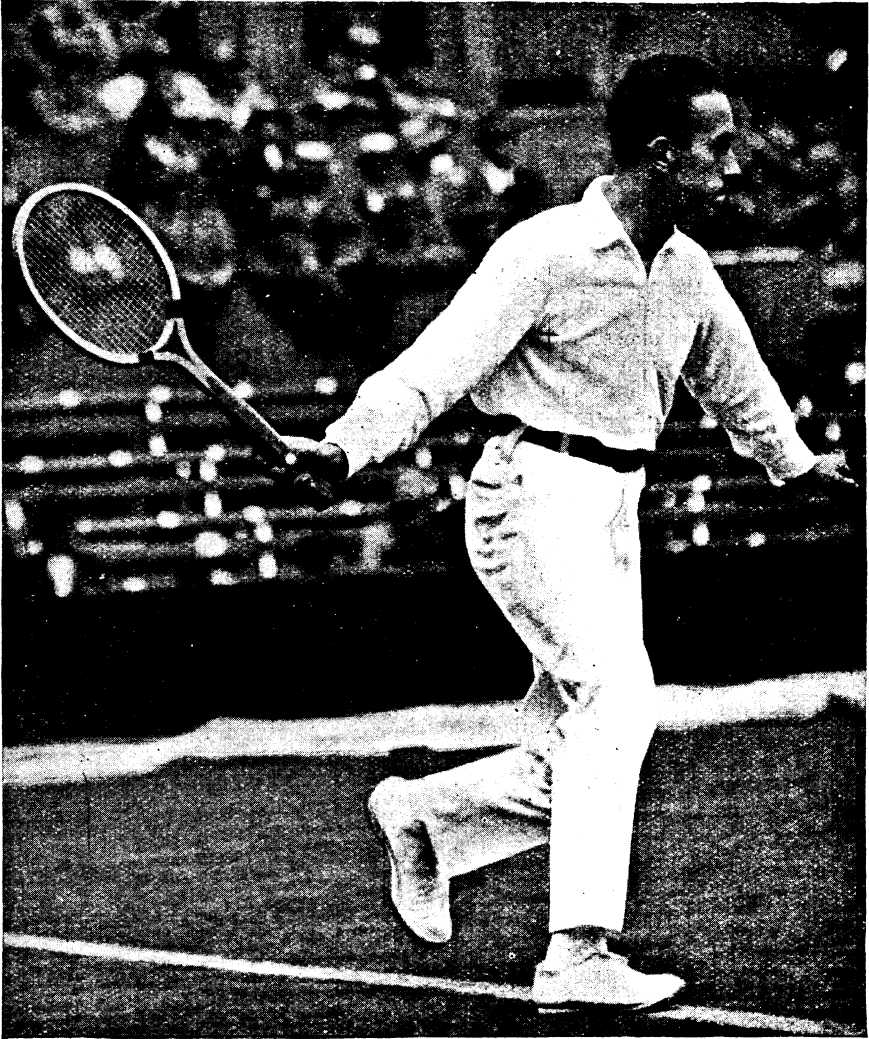


Photo by]

HENRI COCHET IN PLAY.

(Sport & General.

arrived on the court fully decided to win, and, playing better than I had ever done before, I won the match by three sets to one. To win the world's title I had still to defeat the second Spanish representative, Count de Gomar, who, being possessor of a splendid all-round game and clever tactics, is perhaps on hard courts a more dangerous opponent

In an ultimate effort I played the fastest game I was capable of, winning the two next sets easily. The tip that this spectator gave me had been a great factor in my victory. It taught me never to despair, and to keep my mind working during the last phase of a match.

I followed this success by winning in

• Paris the championship of France, defeating Gobert, Borotra, and the holder, Samazeuilh. Less than a year before a second-class player, I was now holder of two World's Championships and Champion of France. Two factors had determined this quick improvement—wall practising and watching great champions during my childhood.

I think that many beginners will quickly attain a certain proficiency if they follow the methods I will now attempt to describe. My advice will appear very simple, but I believe that it is in trying too difficult things that one deviates from the road to success.

The beginner is no sooner the proud possessor of a racket than he goes in quest of an opponent and wants to start playing matches on a tennis court at once. He appears to me as absurd as a boy who, having in his hands a violin for the first time, would attempt to play one of Beethoven's sonatas. On a tennis court the beginner has too many things to think at the same time—he must hit the ball, hit it in the middle of his racket, then send it back over the net and inside the opposite court. He must mind his grip, serving, and footwork. He is feeling, therefore, hopelessly at sea, forgets what he was told the minute before, and his improvement is very slow.

I believe that a beginner ought to play against a wall during at least six months before entering on a tennis court. After this practice, holding a racket will seem to him quite natural, and he will improve quickly. To support my theory I will recall that during my stay in the winter of 1921–22 in the South of France I was very much impressed by the ball-boys of the Nice Lawn Tennis Club, who, playing against a wall every day, make quick improvement in the game, and are possessors of a free-and-easy style. In a different order of ideas, a prize-fighter is not allowed inside a ring before he has mastered the elements of the pugilistic art.

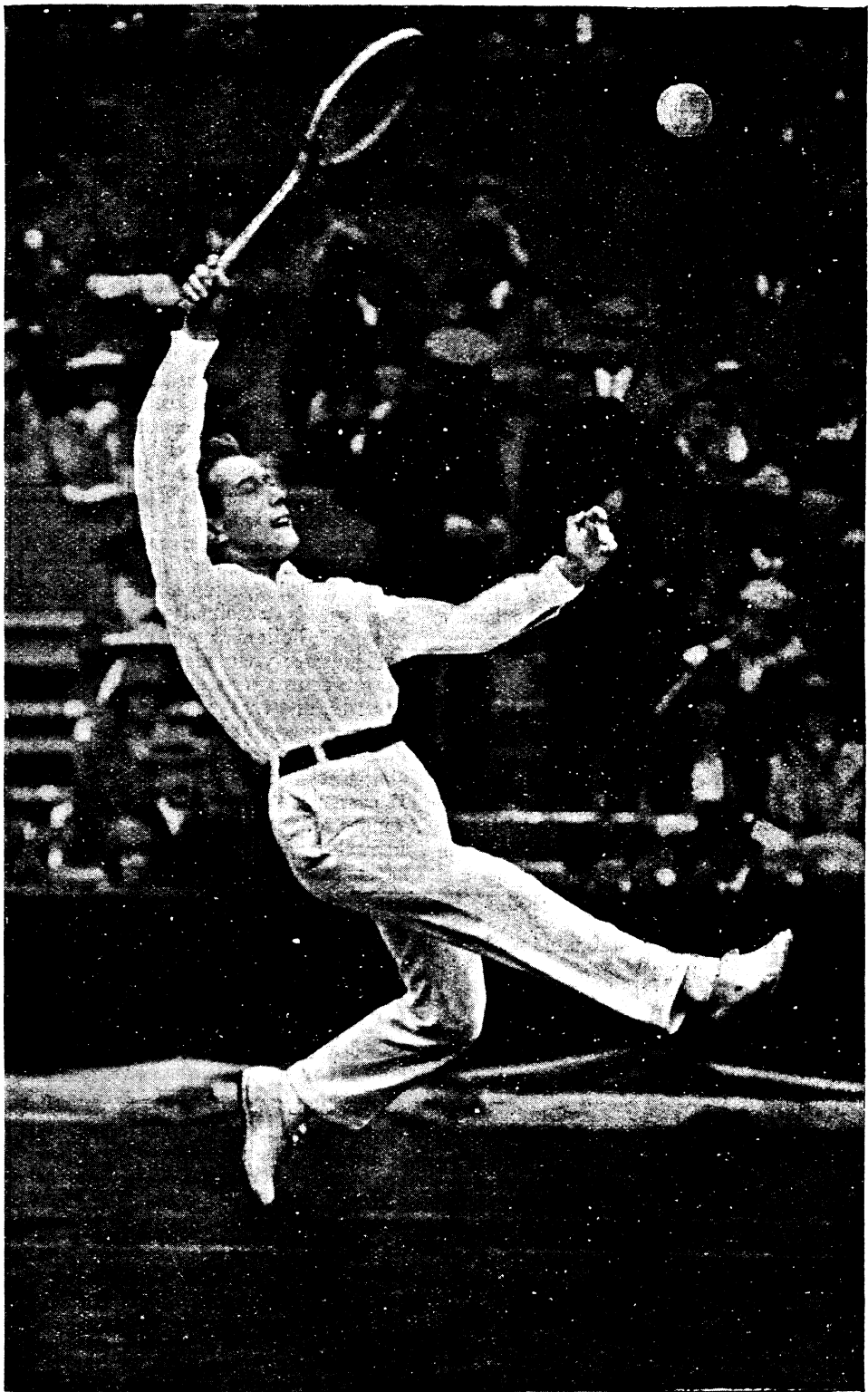
This wall practice must be done very seriously. Having learned to hit back the ball, one will try to acquire good footwork and to play every stroke with the shoulders sideways to the net. The position of the shoulders at the beginning of a stroke is much more important than the position of the feet. Most of the lawn tennis writers have given first importance to footwork, and told how the feet must be placed before hitting a ball. They are not quite right, because every stroke is played on the move in

modern lawn tennis, and because, even if the feet are correctly placed, the body may face the net, and therefore the swing may be cramped. In my opinion the position of the upper part of the body only is important. If one gives all one's attention to having the body sideways to the net, one will always be able to play with a free swing and put all the body-weight in the stroke.

When the beginner has learned to hit the ball in the correct position, he will try to acquire a good style. I am a firm believer in the straight stroke—the stroke with nearly no cut or spin—which allows better placing and is as fast as any if one hits it on the rising ball. It is, in my opinion, the shot of the future. The beginner will get a simple and easy style in trying to suppress all the movements that are not necessary in his stroke production. Of course, he will not get it at once, and only after years of practice and study will he have acquired a great simplicity in his style. The first benefit to follow will be a greater accuracy in his strokes. He will be able to play like a billiard player, all his movements bending towards the direction he wants to give to the ball. This simplicity of style will enable him to play with the minimum of effort. Effortless stroke production will pull him through a hard five-sets match.

After having played during many months against a wall, when the beginner feels perfectly at ease with a racket in his hand, then only he can come on to a tennis court and look for a good, willing opponent to send him back the balls. He will try first to acquire good length and accurate placing, which are the foundation of any game. A player with only service and volleying may get many successes; he will never be a great champion, having nothing to rely on when he finds an opponent able to pass him at the net. He will learn to play all his shots moving forwards, and hitting the ball on the rise. This forward motion will enable him to conserve his balance and be ready for the next stroke. At last, having acquired steadiness and placing, the beginner will be able to enter tennis tournaments and cultivate his tactics. Here I will express my own ideas of tactics.

All the strokes must be played moving towards the net. This forward motion puts speed into the strokes and makes it possible to reach the net quickly. Every shot which is not a passing one ought to be played in view of an advance towards



HENRI COCHET: AN OVERHEAD SMASH.

Photo by Sport & General.

the net, where one gets command of the opponent's court. One must never lose an opportunity to come up and volley on a deep drive. If I believe that the diagonal stroke is the best to angle the opponent out of position, I think the stroke parallel to the side-lines is the best with which to come up and volley. Playing the straight stroke makes it possible to get to the net at the very centre of your opponent's possible returns in the best position to intercept them.

Most players stop straight after they have played a volley. This is a great fault. One must learn to volley on the run, moving towards a place at the net facing the spot where the ball will hit the opposite court. Thus one will be in position before the opponent has sent back the ball—that is the secret of anticipation. A splendid illustration of this point was shown when Brugnon defeated Alonso at Wimbledon. Brugnon's anticipation seemed absolutely uncanny. In fact, it was only his splendid volleys on the run, and his great knowledge of court position, that enabled him to intercept Alonso's drives.

Perfect strokes and good tactics alone are not quite sufficient to win a match. Great calm and coolness are absolutely necessary. One must not be ruffled by the umpire's decision, and one must accept the good and bad ones with a great serenity as an element of luck in the game. It is, in my opinion, quite wrong to correct the mistakes in your favour by giving away points.

One must always keep the mind working, trying to find the opponent's weak strokes

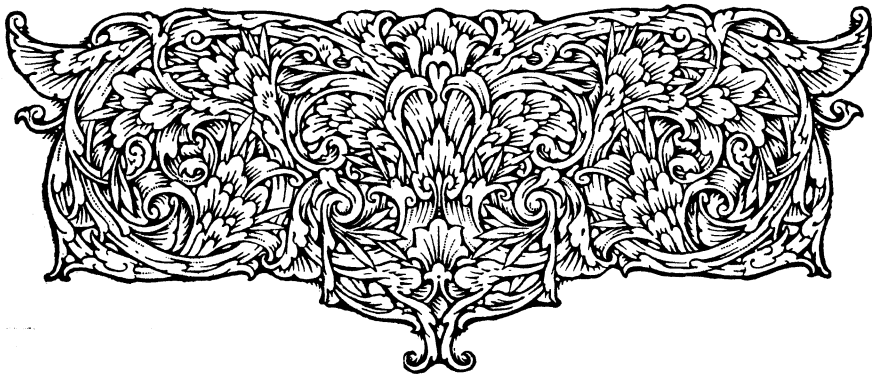
and to find the proper tactics to bring victory. One must not get nervous when playing badly, but try to find the reasons why one is missing strokes. One must never lose heart or confidence. A match is never lost till the last ball is played.

To conclude this article I will tell in a few words what I think as to the preparation before a big tournament. The most important thing is to lead a steady, quiet life and to go to bed at regular hours. It is not necessary at all to train oneself by practising other sports. It can only make one stale before arriving on the court. Skipping and Swedish drill will keep a player fit, and will bring him to the best condition possible.

The question of food is very important and far too much neglected. Like the boxer, when training, the tennis player must adopt a light and simple food, grilled meats being the base of his meals, which must take place not less than two hours before a match.

If physical training is important, mental training is absolutely indispensable to success. Follow Coué's precepts and you will improve your game. You must arrive on the court perfectly confident that you can win, and that you are going to win if you try everything till the last ball.

In short, learn against a wall, adopt a simple style, and I hope you will experience the same luck that I did. Although being winner of two world's championships, I know I need greatly to improve, and I have still a great ambition, which, with the always increasing number of tennis players, appears to me as a forlorn hope—that is, to be able one day to win at Wimbledon the greatest title that a player can desire.



VALERIE FRENCH

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "*Anthony Lyveden*," "*Berry and Co.*," "*Jonah and Co.*,"
"*The Brother of Daphne*," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.—The great woodland estate of Gramarye was on fire, but nobody cared, for the owner, Colonel Winchester, was in a madhouse, to which local opinion held that he had been driven by some malign influence in this wilderness of a property. The mental breakdown of Anthony Lyveden while working for him was ascribed to the same cause. From a spur of the Cotswolds a man looked down upon the holocaust, but cared no more than anyone else, for he had lost his memory. Sitting at his feet was a small dog for whose presence he could not account, and both were in the last stage of exhaustion when found and given a lift to the next village. After bestowing upon himself and the Sealyham the names of "Jonathan" and "Hamlet," in his inability to remember even his own name, Anthony Lyveden set forth to seek his fortune. About this time Lady Touchstone wrote to her kinsman, Cardinal Forest, "Poor Anthony Lyveden's body was found a fortnight ago. We had him buried at Girdle." She was referring to the search for Anthony, who had disappeared, and to the discovery of a dead body assumed to be his. She had gone abroad with her grief-stricken niece, Valerie French, who had been engaged to be married to Anthony, and at Dinard they made the acquaintance of an English girl, André Strongi'th'arm—the *fiancée* of Colonel Winchester—who gave Valerie a profoundly moving account of Anthony's life and work at Gramarye, and of the baleful influence of the place upon his brain. A day later André was recalled to England by the news of Colonel Winchester's sudden recovery. Meantime Anthony Lyveden and his dog fell in with Sir Andrew Plague, K.C., upon the Oxford Road, and by this chance encounter Anthony made for himself a friend indeed. Rough and hot-tempered, but kindly, the famous lawyer took a liking to "Jonathan Wood," and, when he learned that, having lost all memory of his own identity, he was beginning life again, engaged him as his secretary. André had been deeply in love with Anthony, but without awakening any response from him; now, however, that he was apparently dead, she determined to try to forget the matter and devote herself to her *fiancé*, Richard Winchester. At the latter's first meeting with her new friend, Valerie, he astounded the two girls by casually remarking that from a cab in Fleet Street he had just seen Anthony Lyveden, only to lose him again among the byways of the Temple. To the answer, "But he's dead! He's buried at Girdle," Winchester replied, "Nonsense! I'd know him anywhere. Besides, he had his dog with him—a Sealyham, with a big, black patch on his back." Inquiries were at once set on foot, and Winchester himself conducted a house-to-house investigation of the Temple, but all in vain, until a chance acquaintanceship with Lady Touchstone led to Sir Andrew's recognition of a photograph of Anthony in her drawing-room. Even then conversational cross-purposes prevented Lady Touchstone's understanding the lawyer's allusions to the portrait, and it was only after his departure that Valerie, on hearing of the conversation, rang up Sir Andrew's number on the telephone and asked: "Is that Sir Andrew Plague's?" "It is," replied Anthony Lyveden. So Anthony and Valerie met. He did not remember her, and she would not tell him that they had been engaged, but the moment he saw her he loved her with all his heart. The next day he recognised André, riding alone. He remembered her and recalled distinctly that there had been something between them; but that was all. Nervously he accosted her, and from her manner and speech, no less than from the fact that she alone had waked his memory, made sure that when he disappeared he had been pledged to her. As for André, knowing nothing of his loss of memory, she read in his demeanour a declaration of love. Anthony visited Valerie immediately and asked why she had not told him that he was engaged. "Because," replied Valerie, "I wanted you to think you were free." Whereupon, to her dismay, Anthony turned on his heel and walked out of the house. Valerie fled to Bell Hammer, her country house, while André wired to Anthony to meet her next day in the Row. Sir Andrew intercepted the telegram and, suspecting that the sender was at the bottom of the trouble between his secretary and Valerie French, determined to keep the appointment in Anthony's stead.

VII. THE SIEVE OF VANITY.

SIR ANDREW PLAGUE approached the Albert Memorial with the sober steps of one who has no objective, but is merely taking the air. This, by the way, was worth breathing, for it was fresh from Night's cellar and had not lain long enough in Day's parlour to lose its cool bouquet. Sir Andrew marked this and snuffed luxuriously.

He might have been deep in meditation. As a matter of fact, he was looking for a

gentleman of Jewish extraction, who, he had reason to think, would, upon being accosted, prove suspicious and obstructive.

The wire he had intercepted was simple and definite enough.

Joshua will be by the Albert Memorial to-morrow at seven o'clock.

Sir Andrew lifted his head and looked about him.

The shrine, however, seemed to be alone in its glory.

The knight perambulated it, frowning.

Its precincts were deserted. More.

Except for a distant horseman and two park-keepers, there was no human being in sight.

Sir Andrew glanced at his watch and began to pace up and down. . . .

As he turned for the second time, a clock struck seven.

A moment later, the horseman, who was now abreast of the Memorial, stopped, dismounted, and began to make much of his horse. Then he ran his eye over his charge, flicked a speck of dust from the great quarters, and looked about him.

Sir Andrew blew through his nose. He was not in the mood for company, least of all for that of a groom, who was doing the same as himself. He was there to watch, not to be watched. Hang it, how the fellow was staring! Why couldn't he mind his own business? Why didn't his master come and send him packing? Why——

Here the servant approached and touched his hat.

"Major Lyveden, sir?" he ventured.

"That's right," said Sir Andrew faintly, trying to recognise his own voice.

Without a word, the groom turned Joshua round. Then he stepped to the saddle, whipped his head under a flap and proceeded to tighten the girths. This seemed to annoy Joshua, for the moment he felt the pressure he laid back his delicate ears, raised an itching hind-leg with a meaning which was not to be mistaken, and, flinging round his head, snapped viciously in the direction of his aggressor. Beyond, however, conjuring the horse to "get up," the servant ignored his vexation and, after a glance at Sir Andrew, lengthened the stirrup-leathers to their full extent.

The knight, who had not ridden for thirty years, watched the preparations as a man in a trance.

He was to ride this—this brute. Almost immediately. He was to put his foot into that stirrup and haul himself up into—into hell. It was ordained—necessary. He had put his hand to the plough. He had to be brought to the woman—*la femme* of the proverb. And this brute would bring him. There was no other way. *No other way?* Goats and monkeys! Had one to hark back to the Iliad to do a neighbour a service? He wasn't a bushranger—a highwayman. This was the twentieth century—not *Jack and the Beanstalk* or any other blamed pantomime. A-a-ah, the vicious swine! The——

Here the groom looked over the withers and touched his hat.

With a shock, Sir Andrew realised that his hour was come.

For one frantic instant he considered whether he could with decency lead Joshua to meet his mistress. Then that fantastic hope was stillborn, and with a frightful grunt the giant heaved himself into the saddle. . . .

As he gathered the reins——

"Miss André'll be i' the Row, sir. Comin' this way."

Sir Andrew swallowed.

"Right," he said thickly. Then: "Make the brute walk."

Obediently, the groom took the bridle and started Joshua off. . . .

As horse and rider passed down the broad road, he watched their going gloomily, fingering his chin. Presently he sighed profoundly.

"An' a major, too," he muttered. "Must 'ave bin i' the Camuel Detachmen'."

Now, Joshua was a very sound judge—not of men as a whole, but of such as got upon his back. Sir Andrew's seat and hands told him that the knight was no horseman. His instinct told him, first, that the latter was not in the least afraid, and, secondly, that he was a man who meant to have his own way. Accordingly Joshua respected him, hoped very much that he would be content to be a 'passenger,' and decided that, if his directions were given with a heavy hand, they must be accepted in good part.

He walked along slowly, as one who has a charge to fulfil.

As for Sir Andrew, he was concerned entirely for his dignity and his convenience. For the desperate venture upon which he had set out to be successful, he would need every grain of wit and every ounce of assurance at his disposal. And here, right at the commencement of his enterprise, he had been placed at an appalling disadvantage. He not only felt a fool; he was leaning upon the shoulder of Discomfiture itself. The brute between his knees had only to toss its head to distract his attention: while, if it elected to shy. . . .

He rode out of Kensington Gardens, cursing bitterly, to cross a taxi's bows with the air of an Earl Marshal. . . .

As he passed down the Row, the feeling of liability began to wear off. The brute he was riding seemed to be able to behave seemed. . . .

Very gently, by way of proving his ox, the lawyer drew the reins towards his chin.

Instantly Joshua eased his pace to a standstill.

Sir Andrew was greatly relieved.

When, however, upon his lowering and, presently, shaking the reins, the big brown stood like a rock, the knight became less easy.

"Go on!" he cried, clacking vigorously with his tongue. "Go on, you swine! I don't want to stand here all day."

Utterly failing to appreciate that he was being addressed, Joshua looked cheerfully about him and, perceiving no horse within sight, whinnied to proclaim his isolation.

The sympathy which Sir Andrew had always felt for Balaam ripened into an *entente cordiale*.

"Shut up, you fool!" he roared. "And go on, can't you?" He shook the reins frantically. "Proceed. WALK, you blithering ass!"

That Joshua immediately advanced was due partly to the fact that Sir Andrew's delivery was that of the parade-ground, but mainly to the fortunate circumstance that the brown had once put in a month of squadron drill.

The two made their way eastward agreeably enough. . . .

When André Strongi'th'arm perceived them, she at first imagined that she had made a mistake. And when, upon a closer inspection, she observed that the approaching centaur was indeed composed largely of her best hunter, she could hardly believe her eyes. As a matter of fact, it was her obvious, blank astonishment which enabled Sir Andrew to identify a girl he had never seen.

As he came up, frowning, he raised his hat.

"Miss Strongi'th'arm, I think." An almost imperceptible nod confirmed his statement. "Major Lyveden was prevented from coming, and I am here in his stead."

André favoured Sir Andrew with a suspicious stare.

Her sword was out.

"Who are you?" she said shortly.

So far as she was concerned, she could not have said a worse thing. The abrupt demand, the haughtiness of her tone, were like a stoup of wine to her opponent. Sir Andrew forgot himself and Joshua. The peppery knight became the King's Counsel—patient, bland, merciless.

Slowly he drew his rapier.

"My name is Andrew Plague."

"Why isn't Major Lyveden here?"

"Because he's in bed," said Sir Andrew.

"Is he ill?"

"Not yet."

A dangerous light slid into the big, brown eyes. Then, because she was André, their owner rushed in.

"What do you mean—'not yet'?"

"This. Since he met you yesterday, Major Lyveden has been a desperate man—dull, spiritless, shunning the fellowship of friends."

"What friends?"

"His friends," said Sir Andrew, "of whom I have the honour to be one."

André laughed.

"You're very lucky," she said, "to know two such charming people."

Up went the heavy eyebrows.

"Two?"

"Major Lyveden and Valerie French."

"I have never set eyes upon the lady."

André shot the speaker a long and searching look. Sir Andrew blinked back lazily.

"Then why are you here?" she said coldly.

"Because," was the deliberate reply, "a man who has lost his memory is not fair game."

André gasped. Then she went very white.

"D'you mind getting off that horse?" she said. "It—it happens to belong to me."

"I will dismount," said Sir Andrew coolly, "at the close of this interview. I may add that upon this interview your relations with Major Lyveden entirely depend. I have put no pressure upon him, and, if you will deal with me frankly, I shall put none. Otherwise, he will leave the country to-morrow—for the good of his health."

The threat went home. Sir Andrew saw it go. . . .

For a moment the girl hesitated. Then she lifted her head and stared at the gay blue sky. After all, she could afford to laugh.

"In your opinion," she said, "Major Lyveden must be protected?"

"Should occasion arise. A man who has lost his memory—"

"—can be told anything? I see. I suppose, if you'd lost your memory and somebody told you you owed them five thousand pounds, you'd hand it over?"

"I should not," said Sir Andrew quietly. "Neither, I think, would you. But Lyveden would."

André frowned. Then—

"Perhaps you're right," she said gaily. "He's got a very sweet nature. I suppose," she added, flicking her boot with her whip, "the object of this interview is to get from me a confession of the lies I told him yesterday morning?"

The K.C. studied his finger-nails.

"I've told you," he said, "the position. If you want to see him again, you must first of all satisfy me that that's to his advantage."

"D'you know," said André silkily, "that I've a very good mind to whip you across the face?"

"Isn't that Colonel Winchester's job?"

"As a matter of fact," said André, "it's Anthony Lyveden's."

"I don't think he'll do it," said Plague, grimly. "But let that pass. Why isn't it Colonel Winchester's?"

"Because he is not concerned."

The master of cross-examination applied the lash.

"Have you released him?"

André winced. Then she flushed red as fire.

"If he knew of this," she flashed, "I believe he'd break your neck."

"Then," said Sir Andrew agreeably, "pray for my soul."

"I'm to see him at ten o'clock."

"What for?"

Sir Andrew gazed abstractedly into the middle distance. At length—

"To ask him,"



"I've something to say to you," she panted.

he said dreamily, "to ask him to tell Major Lyveden who is your *fiancé*."

With the knob of her switch Miss Strong-
i'th'arm tapped her white teeth reflectively.

"I see," she said quietly. "Well, if he gives the wrong answer, refer him to me."

It was impossible not to admire such consummate nerve. Indeed, Sir Andrew afterwards confessed that at this juncture he was within an ace of throwing up the sponge.

Instead—

"I hope," said the K.C. gently, "I still hope that it will be unnecessary for Major Lyveden to leave England."

"So," said André, "do I. What makes you think," she added, "that I'm so bad for him?"

"I have told you."

"You've quite decided that his depression was not apprehensive?"

Sir Andrew's eyelids flickered.

"What do you mean?"

"You're sure that it was due to what happened here yesterday morning? Certain that it was not the shadow of some coming event?"

Sir Andrew wrinkled his brow.

"When I know," he said, "what happened here yesterday morning, I shall be in a position to judge."

"But you have judged."

"No. I'm here for that purpose."

"And supposing the information is denied you?"

"I shall still be in a position to judge."

"You mean . . . ?"

"That those who decline to speak," said Sir Andrew Plague, "must take the consequences."

"What shadow of right have you to—"

"None."

"Why don't you ask Major Lyveden?"

"If you can't help me, I shall. But a man who's lost—"

"Because you know he'd tell you to go to hell."

"I don't think he would," said Plague, "before a stranger."

"What stranger?"

"Colonel Winchester. I know they were friends once, but . . ."

There was a pause.

His face like a mask, the knight sat motionless, staring with half-closed eyes across the park. André eyed him intently, savagely biting her lip, striving desperately to read his thoughts. She could have sworn he was bluffing. He must be. Yet. . . . How much did he really know? And who—who had told him? And was he honest? Or was he out, if he could, to tear her garland? If he was . . .



"Sir Andrew waved her away."

A mounted policeman passed, self-conscious and jingling, and shot the unwitting pair a curious glance. A squall of sparrows, bickering convulsed the slumber of an adjacent tree. Already from between the high walls of Knightsbridge the confluence of hubbub was beginning to swell into a steady background of uproar, against which the sudden, crisp note of a trumpet stood out in bold relief.

As the call faded—

"If I told you the truth," said André, "you wouldn't believe me."

"Be sure that I shall."

"We shall see. You think Major Lyveden has lost his memory?"

"I know it."

"Yet he accosted me yesterday morning—here, in the Row . . . came up and wished me well . . . begged me to forgive his behaviour . . . used my Christian name . . . at parting kissed my hand . . ."

There was a long silence. At length—

"What was the behaviour," said Sir Andrew, "which he asked you to forgive?"

André hesitated. Then—

"Some people," she said, "might call it—desertion."

"No doubt," was the dry reply. "What was it?"

André's eyes narrowed till they became two gleaming slits.

"You said that you would dismount at the close of this interview. Well . . . this interview is closed. You came to protect Major Lyveden. You were gallant enough to say so. If you believe what I've told you, it may occur to your intelligence that he is perfectly capable of taking care of himself."

"In fact," said Sir Andrew imperturbably, "you think that his loss of memory is assumed?"

"Naturally."

Sir Andrew rubbed his nose.

"I don't know that I blame you," he said. "Still. . . . Why should he make belief?"

André took a deep breath.

"I have said that this interview——"

"I know, I know. If you like, I'll beg your pardon. I believed you a knave. I'm going to save you now from being a fool."

"Will you get off that horse?"—passionately.

"No," said Sir Andrew, "I won't. Now, listen to me. Lyveden's lost his memory. You may take that from me. From what you tell me, it seems it's begun to return.

He's remembered you—and your works. To-morrow—perhaps to-day—he'll remember——"

"What?" said Anthony Lyveden, quietly enough.

André jumped violently, but Placé never moved. The man was unshakable. He continued to address his opponent.

"*The ring you wear,*" he said steadily, "*upon your engagement finger.*"

There was an electric silence.

André began to tremble suddenly. Instantly Lyveden set a hand upon her knee. The man was out of breath and fairly streaming with sweat. He controlled his voice somehow.

"Try me," he said, smiling. "Don't be afraid of him."

Gently he took her left hand and drew off its glove. . . .

The emerald which Winchester had set there winked in the young sunlight.

For a moment Lyveden peered at the gem. Then—

"That's right," he said quietly. "We chose it together. It had to be made smaller to fit your finger." He put her hand to his lips and let it go. Then he turned to his dumfounded employer. "You will please," he said coldly, "apologise to this lady for a presumption which no patronage can warrant and no friendship survive."

Twice Sir Andrew opened and shut his mouth. Then he slid off Joshua, uncovered, attempted ineffectually to speak, turned and walked uncertainly away. . . .

"Oh . . . Anthony! . . ."

The sorrow with which that cry was laden wrung Lyveden's heart.

"What?"

André began to weep silently.

"What?" cried Anthony. "What? What have I said?"

"God forgive me," wailed André. "I'm very wicked."

"What d'you mean, André?"

"I thought," sobbed the girl, "you were pretending you'd lost your memory"—Anthony started—"pretending, because—because you loved me best."

"Best?"

"And now—you pretend—you haven't lost it, to—to save—my—rotten—face . . ." She sat up suddenly and shook the tears out of her eyes. "Get up," she said, pointing to Joshua. "Get up, you splendid gentleman, and come with me."

For a moment Anthony hesitated. Then he swung himself into the saddle. . . .

André was cantering up the Row. He followed her amazedly.

They overtook Sir Andrew bareheaded, sweating, shaking his fists at heaven and audibly condemning all women to an inferno of which—to judge from his report—Dante can never have heard, to which Rabelais alone could have done justice.

"Mr. Plague!" cried André. "Mr. Plague!"

The knight let an adjective go and stopped still where he stood.

"*Begone!*" he bellowed. "*Begone!*"

André flung herself out of the saddle and ran to the rails.

"I've something to say to you," she panted, "which I want Major Lyveden to hear." Sir Andrew waved her away, and Anthony approached dazedly. "I want to beg your pardon." At the word the knight started. Then he let fall his hand and turned to the speaker. "This ring is *not* Major Lyveden's. He said what he did just now out of loyalty—loyalty to me . . . misplaced loyalty. He threw your friendship to the winds to save my face. He doesn't care a rap about me. But, because I'm weak as water and he's strong, he took my part against you, no matter what it cost. And I can't let you go like this. You're *right*. D'you hear? *Right*. Right all along the line. God knows how you saw the bog I've jumped in when I couldn't see it myself. But you did. And you've opened my eyes. I'm in up to the neck—and now I'm going to get out." She swung round upon Lyveden. "Ever since yesterday morning you've thought you were tied to me. I gave you that idea. I never meant to. I didn't know you'd lost your memory. You recognised me, and you knew there'd been something between us. But that was all. *So there had*—but not of your making. I don't know how much you remember, but you can take it from me—your hands are clean . . . spotless, as mine are foul. You're brave and gallant and faithful. I'm not fit to lick your boots. But—I forgot all that . . . yesterday morning." Her voice broke, and she stamped, as if impatient of this evidence of emotion. "And now give me Joshua and go. I'm going to the man I'm engaged to, to tell him the truth. If he's fool enough to stick to me after that, that's his funeral. And you go to Valerie French, and say I sent you. Tell her she doesn't deserve you, because no woman does that. And tell her I never meant to do her down, black as it looks. Mr. Plague'll tell you I'm not a

knave. Only a fool . . . a crazy, vain-glorious fool . . . with her heart on her sleeve."

She whipped about, vaulted—habit and all—on to Joshua's back, twitched the bridle over the other horse's head, and flung down the Row with irons flying.

The two men stared in her wake.

After a little they turned and looked at one another.

"How the devil," said Plague, blinking, "did she make that horse move?"

* * * * *

The next two hours were crowded.

Anthony's one idea was to see Valerie: Sir Andrew's was to communicate with Lady Touchstone. The one, of course, was depending upon the other. Only her aunt knew where Valerie was. Food and raiment, however, had to be considered. Anthony had neither shaved nor bathed. Sir Andrew had done both, and felt as though he had done neither. A second bath was, of course, essential. Then, breakfast had to be swallowed. . . .

The most pregnant moment of all was that at which Sir Andrew excitedly informed the cook-general of a Bloomsbury boarding house that 'the misunderstanding had been cleared up, and his secretary was ready and willing to fulfil his contract of marriage with her niece.' It was not the knight's fault that he had been given the wrong number, and, having regard to the war conditions invariably prevailing at Tomb Street during the 'rush' half-hour, Miss Ada Margetts may be forgiven for admitting that she was Lady Touchstone. The result, however, was exhausting. Twice did Miss Margetts desire Sir Andrew to repeat his amazing news, and twice, literally squinting with suppressed emotion, did the knight, to his eternal credit, comply with her request. Then he was asked to 'old the line.' . . . After a hideous two minutes, during which Miss Margetts helped a cabman to transport an American trunk from the third floor to the street, communication was re-established.

"Oo d'you want ter speak to?" inquired Miss Margetts.

"Goats and monkeys!" shrieked Plague.

"Nothin' doin'," said Ada, replacing the receiver and picking up a pair of boots.

She did not even smile. She had no time. It was the 'rush' half-hour.

Sir Andrew did not replace his receiver. Instead, he detached it with great violence and hurled it into the garden. There it was presently found by Patch, the Sealyham, who

played with it for an hour, and then buried it providently under the rhododendrons.

The disruption of the telephone rendered indispensable a visit to Hill Street. . . .

More electricity was induced later, when Lady Touchstone, whose hold on topography was always treacherous, found herself unable to give the direction of Bell Hammer and could only tearfully insist that 'you always passed through Ealing.' Even when it was established that the estate lay in Hampshire, the poor lady continued to confound, by declaring that the passage of Ealing was a condition precedent to anyone's successful arrival at Bell Hammer, and an attempt at joint map reading, in the proportion of one small-scale map to three shaking forefingers, resulted in Sir Andrew being assisted into the morning-room and set in a draught. Indeed, had she not finally chanced to refer to the notoriety which Ealing had earned as a haunt of highwaymen—

"Ealing?" shrieked Anthony. "You mean Hounslow! Hounslow Heath!"

Lady Touchstone stared. Then she clapped a hand to her mouth.

"That's right," she whispered. "I meant Hounslow. Not that I like Ealing, but that doesn't matter. It's Hounslow you go through. Did ever you know such an idiot? I'm dreadfully sorry, Anthony. Most dreadfully sorry. And simply frightened to death. I'll go and get under a bed while you break it to *him*."

* * * * *

The limousine flung through Basingstoke at an unlawful pace, and presently happening upon a ten-mile stretch of metalling, which clearly owed its being to the Roman ruler, swallowed it whole in thirteen minutes dead.

Five minutes later my lady sailed into Brooch, slid past the castle, dropped down the busy main street and then, coming to a carfax, crept to a policeman's elbow humbly enough.

"Bell 'Ammer?" said the peace officer. "Bell 'Ammer lays on your right." He pointed to a slit in an old half-timbered row. "Keep along there till you see the Close on your left. Then bear right-anded on to the Bloodstock road. Bell 'Ammer's the secon' lodge after you pass the village o' Napery Green."

The direction was sound and the road good. The car made up for the check handsomely. . . .

Indeed, she finished her business at a quarter to one by coming to rest at the

steps of a broad mansion, upon which its spreading mantle of wistaria was blooming for the second time.

Anthony Lyveden alighted and rang the bell.

A moment later he was standing before Valerie French.

The girl looked tired, as one who has slept but ill the night before, and, when she spoke, her tone was that of the soldier who has retired from the fight—not because he is beaten, or afraid, or weary, but because he has perceived that he is not destined to prevail.

"Why have you come?"

"Because I love you, Valerie."

Valerie turned her head and stared out of a window.

"Do you?" she said listlessly. "Why?"

"I think it's very natural," said Anthony Lyveden. "I loved you the moment I saw you—that afternoon. I didn't know it then. But I do now."

"Who's told you?" said Valerie. "My aunt?"

Anthony shook his head.

"I realised it myself—yesterday morning."

A faint frown gathered on Valerie's brow.

"Yesterday morning?" she said, as one who is troubled with a problem he has no desire to solve.

"Yesterday morning," repeated Anthony, "before I saw you, or Forsyth. . . . Yesterday morning I found out a terrible thing. I found that I was engaged—engaged to *somebody else*. I wasn't really, but I believed I was. . . . And when I made that discovery—that false discovery. . . . when I realised what it meant—then all of a sudden I knew that I loved you. . . . It's strange, but I suppose that's the way of a fool. If you're a fool, you've got to have something forcibly taken away before you can realise that *without it* you can't go on. . . . Well, I'm a prize fool. There I was in my Paradise, wondering why on earth I was so happy. Suddenly my Paradise was gone. . . . And the loss opened my eyes."

"What," said Valerie slowly, "what made you think that you were engaged?"

"I met a girl in the Park, and I recognised her. I can't tell you how or why. I just did. I remembered her, and I remembered her name."

"Yes?"

"André."

Valerie caught her breath. Then she went very white.

"Go on," she said quietly.



"Just look me full in the eyes. There, like that. That's how you used to look, lad."

"I couldn't remember where I'd met her, or anything else—except . . . except that there'd been something between us . . . *something* . . . I didn't know what. . . . Well, we spoke for a little, and I seem to have said the wrong things. It seemed absurd to tell her I'd lost my memory, because I'd remembered her. And somehow, in my efforts to get at the truth, I gave her the impression that I wanted to call back Time.

. . . I only wanted to find out how I stood; she thought I wanted to take back something I'd said or done. . . . And when we parted she thought that I loved her, and I thought that I was engaged. . . .

"Well, I had to tell you—somehow. I knew you had no idea—*knew*. You'd never 've let me hold you and kiss your lips if you'd known that all the time I was pledged elsewhere. Some girls, perhaps. . . . But you—*never*. And then, when I told you, I found that you *did* know—*had* known all along. I found that you had deceived me. I found that you, my idol, had done the most despicable thing. *You told me so, Valerie*. You never even tried to conceal it. You put your arms round my neck and told me so . . . told me you'd cheated me and let another girl down. . . .

"And I went out of your flat, picked up Patch, and tramped the streets of London till I could hardly stand. I was beside myself, partly because I'd been disillusioned, but mainly because, for all my disillusionment, I knew that I loved you still. . . ."

There was a long silence. At length—

"Why are you here?" said Valerie.

"Because this morning I met her, and she told me the truth."

"You know. . . ."

"I know enough. I know that yesterday I made a ghastly blunder. I know that I *was* engaged . . . but not to her. And I know, thank God, that my hands are clean, Valerie, and that I have the right to come and ask your pardon for a mindless man's mistake."

Valerie put a hand to her head.

"You remembered her," she said. "You remembered André. And then you thought . . . I see," she added slowly. "Yes, it was natural enough." She rose and put out her hands. "I'm awfully glad you came, Anthony. Most awfully glad." He went to her quickly and took her hands in his. "But I'm awfully sorry you know about our engagement. And now"—she looked in his eyes—"for once I'm going to tell you the absolute truth. You're *not* engaged to me. You were, but you're not any more. You're free—free as the air."

"You mean. . . ."

"What I say, Anthony. You are—released."

"But, Valerie, I love you! *I love you!* Don't you—don't you love me?"

The girl turned her head and regarded a photograph. This was framed in silver and standing upon the mantelpiece. It was a splendid likeness of Anthony Lyveden.

"I did—frightfully," she said. "I loved you so much that nothing in the world mattered—except your smile. But now . . ."

"Valerie! Valerie!" cried the man. "What have I done? It wasn't my fault that I made that crack-brained mistake. And I'd never 've dreamed you'd deceived me if you hadn't told me yourself."

"You would. You did. You asked me before I told you."

"Only because your manner gave you away."

"I know," said Valerie fretfully. "I know. It—it wasn't your fault."

"And though you'd done this thing—this dreadful thing, I loved you still. I tell you, I tramped the streets. I was nearly out of my mind. Don't you believe me?"

"Yes."

"Then why d'you think it was? If I hadn't loved you, Valerie, d'you think I'd 've cared? What made my engagement so hideous? My love for you! What made your deception so bitter? My love for you. I tell you, I've come out of Hell. Don't send me back."

"I know you love me," said Valerie. "I know you do." With a sudden movement she put her arms round his neck. "No, don't kiss me. Just look me full in the eyes. There, like that. That's how you used to look, lad. . . . And now listen. I think you'll understand."

"I'm thankful this mistake's been cleared up—most thankful. In a way, it's been like a bad dream. And now I'm awake . . . in a way. When you left me yesterday, I prayed for death. It—was—the—last—straw. And there have been so many . . . I don't blame you in the least. To tell you the truth, I think I should have done just the same. In fact, once upon a time I did. But that's another story . . . And when you say you love me, I believe you do. And I'm very, very proud and very grateful. But . . ."

"You . . . don't . . . love . . . me?"

"I want your old love, Anthony. And only the return of your memory can give me that. Perhaps I'm asking a lot, but then, you see, I'm spoiled. You've spoiled me. You can't remember doing it, but you did. And when you *do* remember, lad, then you'll understand why this new lamp—handsome and shining as it is—isn't the same."

"But, Valerie, you loved me yesterday—the day before! You say that, when I left you, you prayed for death. That means you loved me. The new lamp was good enough then."

"I suppose it was. I don't know if it would have lasted. Perhaps it would. But

now. . . ." She dropped her head upon his chest. "Oh, Anthony, can't you see? Must I tell you right out?"

The man stared over her head, frowning and seeing nothing.

After a little—

"No," he said, "I can't see. You must tell me right out."

"Well, then," said Valerie gently, "you must remember that I'm a woman. . . . And women are vain . . . proud . . . bursting with *amour propre*. It isn't your fault, I know, but—you've remembered André. . . ." She felt him stiffen, and lifted up her head. "And so, you see, dear," she added, with her eyes on his, "you've just got somehow to remember me," and the moment the words had been spoken she could have bitten out her tongue.

Her hands slipped from his shoulders and she turned away.

As she came to a window—

"I'm going into the garden," she said shakily. "Ring and tell them you want to get ready for lunch. And then come and find me—just as you used to do."

Anthony watched her pass across the terrace and down the sunlit steps.

Then he flung back his head and clapped his hands to his eyes.

* * * * *

Valerie passed down into the garden, cold with rage. She was furious with Fate, most furious with herself. She had done the unspeakable thing. She had squealed under the lash.

She had been hurt hideously, and she had shown Anthony the wound. She had lost desperately, and she had let him see that she cared. Worse. She had usurped his heart's function . . . told him the way to comfort her . . . explained in so many words that his kiss could make her well.

For two or three minutes she wallowed in the torment of mortification. Then the red mist lifted, and she examined her stripes.

Truly Fate knew how and where to lay on.

After everything—after all Anthony and she had been to each other—after all her blazing advertisement of his love—after all her secure compassion for André Strongi'th'arm, he had forgotten her and remembered André . . . remembered a girl he had only seen twice in his life. The king had forgotten his queen, but remembered the wench who had dared to aspire to the steps of her throne. And André—the wench—was laughing . . . hugging the truth to her breast, where it would hang *for ever*. The queen

might have Anthony's love, but the wench had his remembrance. And Anthony had only seen her twice . . . only twice . . .

Valerie stopped still and stared at a fat peacock hewn out of box.

"My God," she breathed, "what's the matter with me? Have I no personality, no charm? No beauty of body or soul? No strength of character? Have I made no impression at all—after all these months? *None*. But André . . . in half an hour . . . How can I feel the same? How *can* I? How could anyone?"

She pulled herself together and went on slowly.

He would be coming now—any moment. And she had plans to make. Things had to be determined at once. Their position had to be defined—that afternoon. She had released him, and he . . . did not desire . . . to be released. He would plead—importune her to let their engagement go on . . . Valerie decided to let him have his way. He would want it so much, and she—she didn't care. Yes. It had come to that. *She didn't care.*

Didn't she? Was she sure? Because, if she didn't care. . . .

For the life of her, Valerie could not determine whether she cared or not. Her love had been stunned. And she was turning it over, trying to ascertain whether it was quick or dead. Then, whilst she was peering, she heard Anthony call. And at the sound of his voice her love opened its eyes.

She did care, then? Yes, of course she cared. But—in a *different way*. There was something—some bar between them. Not a bar, exactly—

Again she heard him call her—quietly, with no assurance . . . like a man who is rather afraid of a Christian name.

A great wave of pity surged over Valerie's heart. She felt as though she had beaten a faithful dog. And now, for all its devotion, the dog was afraid of her, uncertain of its reception. It was pathetic. After all, it wasn't the dog's fault. He couldn't understand. . . .

He couldn't understand.

The phrase flamed. That was it. That was the bar—the shadow which lay between. Their mutual understanding had been infinite. And now it was gone. The splendid, perfect bridge had become a jetty. And while she could go the length of the jetty, Anthony must stand still upon the opposite shore—because he couldn't under-

stand. And he couldn't understand because he couldn't remember.

Twenty-four hours ago that hadn't mattered. But then his memory was withered. Then, whole or halt, the man was still Anthony—her Anthony. Then she could have crooned over his infirmity. But now the lame had walked—for *somebody else*. . . . What hadn't mattered twenty-four hours ago had become vital.

Valerie turned to meet Lyveden, feeling curiously uncertain of herself.

Her anger was gone. Her overwhelming pity had put out that fire. Her love was in fretful attendance. One moment it was there, panting: the next, it was out of reach. It seemed to come in gusts, as the wind on a boisterous day. Now it was tearing, and now the air was dead calm.

She spent the whole of luncheon and most of the afternoon probing this mystery—a painful and bootless operation. As for Anthony, he spent the whole of his time trying to remember. This was transparently plain. Indeed, he made no secret of his endeavours. Valerie could have screamed. . . .

When luncheon was over, by his request, the girl showed him the house—an uncanny business. After a little, however, she fell into her stride. . . .

"This is the library."

Anthony followed her in.

For a moment he stood, looking round. Then—

"What a very beautiful room," he said.

Valerie agreed politely. She could not tell him that only three months before it had been his sanctuary: that that was his tobacco upon the table: that those were his pipes. . . .

It was the same everywhere. The place bristled with memories. Real evidence of his recent habitation stood out on every side. He admired a rug he had given her, 'because it was fit for a queen.' He brushed by his own overcoat: accepted his own cigarettes. . . . Memories and evidence alike fell upon the bare rock. 'And because they had no root, they withered away.' He was pushing his way through a thicket, searching for boughs. Valerie tramped behind, and the boughs, which, of his blindness, Anthony thrust out of his way, flung back and hit her in the face.

On a sudden, desperate impulse, she took him upstairs and showed him the room in which he had lain sick of brain fever.

Anthony stared about him.

"I take it," he said slowly, "this was my room."

Valerie could only nod.

The she stepped to the wardrobe and pulled out a drawer. It was full of collars and ties.

Together they peered at them.

"Mine?" he whispered.

"Yes."

Presently they walked in the garden, as they had walked before—times without number. It seemed impossible that he should find the pleasance strange. . . . hesitate at this corner, where they always turned. . . . spell out the motto on the sundial, like a visitor. Yet he did all these things.

They came to the spot—the low stone seat where he had asked Valerie to be his wife. As they approached it, Valerie began to tremble. Surely this. . . . The next instant they were by—safe and sound. It meant no more to him than a seat on the front at Brighton meant to her.

Later, Anthony announced that he thought she could sing.

"Not that I remember," he added hastily. The poor fellow was honest enough. "But there was a piano in the library, and I saw music about."

"I used to," said Valerie. "Would you like me to now?"

"Oh, if you would. . . ."

Such pathetic anxiety could have but one sire.

Valerie shivered.

For half an hour, perhaps, she sang steadily. Anthony sat in a chair with his head in his hands. The airs were brutally familiar, the beautiful voice foreign. It was no good.

She gave him tea on the terrace before he left. And there, as well as they could, they thrashed things out.

"D'you want me to keep away?" said Anthony suddenly.

Valerie regarded the toe of a little suede shoe.

"No," she said, "I don't. I love you, you know."

"But you said——"

"I know. Don't remind me of that. You don't mean to me what you did. But nothing else on earth means anything at all." She lifted her head and gazed into the park. Under the afternoon sun this made a royal picture. A Goldsmith might have caught the landscape's smile, a Boucher

its dainty charm, but only a dying John of Gaunt could have heard its utterance. Valerie continued, slowly, measuring her words: "You see, when I thought your memory was dead, I didn't care. The only thing that could have made me mind would have been your regret. But you didn't seem to care at all. So I didn't,

"Because I was richer once, I'm not going to whine. As for my memory, if there's a God in heaven, it'll come back. And when it does—when it does, will you marry me, Valerie?"

"Yes," said Valerie, "I will."

"Till then—may we be betrothed?"

"Yes."

Anthony hesitated. Then—

"You're very good to me," he said, turning away.

In an instant the girl was on her knees at his feet.

"Anthony, Anthony," she wailed, "how can you talk like that?" She caught his hands and pressed them against her



"Yes, there lay the truth."

either. But now—now that I know it's not dead—only asleep—perhaps because it's human to be a fool, I want it back. All of a sudden it's become a precious bit of you—a bit I can't spare. But I can't spare what's left of you, either, Anthony lad. Be sure of that."

Anthony rose to his feet and bared his head.

"I'm very rich," he said gently.

face. "You blessed, wonderful thing! I'm the very luckiest woman in all the world—and the most ungrateful. You talk about my being good. I'm wicked, graceless, cruel. 'Good to you.' I couldn't be good to you, Anthony. A priest can't be good to his god. Besides, I love you too much. D'you hear? I love you too much. It's because I love you so much that I've behaved as I have this miserable day.

Yesterday was a shock—a frightful shock. I've been dazed—distracted ever since. . . .” She put her arms about him and buried her face in his coat. Anthony stood like a rock. “I won't come back this evening,” she added quietly. “I want to be quite alone. But I'll come up to-morrow to stay, and if you'll ask me to dinner, I'll dine with you. Don't think I'm being nice. That's utter blasphemy. I'm just crazy about you, and that's the truth.”

If ever a heart gave tongue, it did so then. If ever love was afire, that speech betrayed it.

Anthony lifted her up and kissed her mouth. . . .

It was a most natural action. Valerie herself would have been surprised, dismayed, if he had not done it. It was the acceptance of her oblation . . . the touching and return of the cup. . . .

Yet, when she felt his touch, only by a most violent effort did she subdue a shudder. And when he kissed her, the blood froze in her veins.

Anthony noticed nothing, or, if he did, attributed it to the shaking she had had the day before. When all was said and done, he felt shaken himself—shaken and rather shy of his beautiful lady.

When it was time for him to go, she came to the steps. At the last he kissed her hand and remarked how cold it was.

“My hands were always cold,” said Valerie.

Anthony read a meaning that was not there, and could have thrown up his hat. And she saw him read it, and could have burst into tears.

Then he entered the car and was whirled away. . . .

Valerie almost fled to the library. Into her hands had been thrust the sieve of

truth—the truth about her feeling for Anthony Lyveden. All she had to do was to unravel it. She put a match to the fire and curled herself in a chair. . . .

Anthony was all her world. Whether she loved him or not, there was no one and nothing else. There never would be. That was as clear as daylight. More. Love him she did—desperately . . . more, perhaps, than ever she had loved him before, so long as he did not love her.

Anthony in repose she found most worshipping. She could sit all day at his feet. But the moment he became the lover, she loathed the sight of him. In a word, while she could love him, Anthony must not love her. Any protestation of love made her feel cold. A corporal expression of affection was simply revolting. Why? *Because he could not remember.*

Did she touch his hand—a million tender memories were behind that movement. Did he touch hers—he was impelled by some new motive, in which she had no share. It might be love: it might be—anything. She could take hold of Anthony, but Anthony must not respond. She could caress him, just as one clasps a casket—because of the relics it holds. She would be touching the old Anthony . . . the one she had worshipped and lost . . . the one who was dead . . . dead. And the dead could not respond. If they did, it was gruesome—loathly. If they did, love was swallowed up in death—instantly. . . .

Yes, there lay the truth.

She could go to him, but he could not return to her. When he tried. . . .

Valerie shuddered.

As for Anthony, he was peering out of the limousine's window, marking Brooch's bulwarks and striving desperately to remember that he had seen them before.

A further instalment of this story will appear in the next number.





A SUMMER NIGHT

By LILIAN HOLMES

PIPING PETER'S abroad to-night—

List to his reedy notes;
Borne on the wings of the summer wind
The spell of his music floats;
Lured are the barley fields to song,
Dancing the dim, green oats.



Pipe he ever so soft and low,
The lilt of his flute shall reach
The sagging sail of the tallest fir,
The drooping tent of the beech;
Charming their heavy limbs to life,
Stirring the soul of each.



Piping Peter, come, pipe your lays,
But the sweetest tunes to me
Are the tunes where the corn and clover kiss,
And the marshes meet the sea,
Where the rustling reeds and the sea-mews
merge
In plaintive harmony.



"Practically assured that he was dealing with either a lunatic or a criminal, the youth backed a step."

ANNE AND THE AGENT

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

ANNE, emerging from a side-street, stood for perhaps two minutes upon the pavement, gazing thoughtfully up at the block of flats that reared its towering head on the other side of the road. Then she crossed the street, entered the big, tiled hall and tapped on the neat glass door whereon appeared the inscription : ESTATE OFFICE.

"Come in," said a voice.

Anne turned the handle and obeyed. The little room seemed very dark after the sunset glow of the street ; as her eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, she perceived that a man had risen from a chair beside a desk and was regarding her politely.

"There was a furnished flat advertised to let here yesterday," said Anne. "Could I see it, please ?"

There was a little pause, while the man surveyed her courteously.

"Yesterday ?" he said at last. "Yes, there was, but I'm afraid it's let now."

"Oh !" said Anne blankly. She had not allowed herself to think of this possibility. "I—I'm sorry," she added slowly. "Thank you." She was turning away when the man's voice checked her.

"Half a moment ! I nearly forgot—there's another vacant to-day."

Anne turned quickly.

"Oh, thank you ! May I see it ?"

"I'll show you."

He turned to the desk, wrote rapidly upon a pad, and placed it prominently beneath a paper-weight. Then, holding open the door, he followed her into the hall. A moment later the lift, under the skilled and nop-

chalant guidance of a diminutive youth clad chiefly in very bright buttons, was bearing them aloft.

The upward journey enabled Anne to study her companion more closely. She saw that he was quite a young man, with a cheerful, freckled countenance and a noticeable jaw; his eyes were grey and of an incorrigibly optimistic expression; he wore grey tweeds of a considerable age. Anne, whom experience had taught to assume that all house-agents were bald, elderly and contemptuous, made haste to revise that theory.

In due course the lift stopped, decanted its cargo, and floated out of sight. The young man took a bunch of keys from his pocket and approached a neat green door ornamented with a brass knocker fashioned in the semblance of a man on horseback.

"Here we are," he observed. "This is the top floor, you see." He threw open the door. Anne, stepping past him, gave a little gasp.

In the course of a not uneventful career she had sojourned from time to time in a variety of furnished rooms, flats and houses, but never in one at all like this. The hall in which she stood was small, square and panelled to the ceiling; against one wall stood an old red lacquer cabinet; a long mirror with a narrow, beautifully carved border gave back her reflection; in a corner an old, warped oak chest supported a huge jade bowl; from the ceiling depended a brass lamp of perfect design.

"Oh!" said Anne. She turned quickly to the house-agent. "I—I'm afraid I couldn't afford—I ought to have asked. What—what is the rent, please?"

"Two and a half guineas a week," answered the young man promptly.

Anne stared at him.

"Two and a— But that's ridic—I mean it can't be!"

The young man looked at her gravely.

"There are plenty of people we shouldn't care to let this flat to. The rent depends upon the tenant."

"But," said Anne, considerably bewildered, "doesn't Lord Yendall own these flats?"

"He does."

"Does he let them all on—on those terms?"

"Not all," said the house-agent. "Not all." He turned and opened a door. "The question of rent can stand over. You haven't seen the place yet. This is the sitting-room."

Anne followed him mechanically, marvel-

ling at this unbusinesslike situation. She was about to voice her astonishment anew when the young man swung round and favoured her with a smile so infectious that she found herself involuntarily smiling back.

"There are," he said, "certain fixtures to be taken over. The best of them isn't in the flat at all. Come here."

He motioned her towards the window. Anne, obediently advancing, noted in passing that the room more than fulfilled the promise of the hall. Everything in it was exactly what it should have been, from the little Queen Anne bureau in the corner to the tall candlesticks upon the mantelsheff. It was the kind of room that is more commonly dreamt about than seen. Then, as she reached the window and looked out, even the room faded from her mind.

The swift ascent of the lift had not impressed the height of the building upon her. Now, as she stood looking down, it seemed that all London lay spread out before her.

Below, an uneven, irregular prairie of roofs stretched away to where, far to her left, the dome of St. Paul's stood up dimly out of the afternoon haze; near it showed a faint silver streak that was the river. Closer at hand her eye picked out the green patches of the parks; here and there broad streets, studded with little ant-like figures, seemed to begin and end abruptly in a tangle of buildings. Away to the south the long bulk of the Crystal Palace glittered in the last of the sun; beyond lay the vague blue line of the Surrey hills. From a myriad chimneys the smoke drifted in slender pillars up into the still sky.

The voice of the house-agent called her back to more urgent matters.

"Good!" he said. "The flat's yours."

With an effort Anne turned her eyes from the window to his cheerful, freckled face.

"What do you mean? I haven't—"

"I mean that you're the obvious tenant—the only possible tenant." He smiled again.

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Anne, smiling back, "but I do know that having discovered it's possible to live with a view like this, it doesn't seem possible to live without it."

"That," said the house-agent, "is undoubtedly the proper spirit. Come and see the rest of it. You'll find that the view will come with you."

Twenty minutes later they returned to the sitting-room. Anne wore a slightly

dazed expression, the expression of one who by chance stumbles upon incredible wonders, as, indeed, she had.

"Sit down," said the house-agent. "I know how you feel. Rather overpowering at first." He pushed forward an immense armchair.

"It's—it's wonderful!" said Anne.

"Some people say," observed the house-agent, leaning his shoulders against the mantelshelf and looking down at her, "that you can't make a home out of a flat. They're wrong."

"What I can't understand," said Anne, "is how anyone who'd ever lived here could possibly leave it." She was conscious of a vague surprise that she, who had ever considered dignity a most desirable attribute, should be conversing thus amiably with a house-agent whom she knew not at all; but there was something about the young man's all-conquering smile which induced a sensation of having known him for years.

"Ah!" said the house-agent. "Until a short time ago I couldn't understand it myself. But now I do. The man who lived here has—er—well, not to put too fine a point on it, discovered that a home is not everything. He had to decide between giving up his home or giving up his—er—lady. So he decided."

"But——" said Anne, and then stopped. She turned in her chair and faced him squarely. "Do you know Lord Yendall? But, of course, you must, if you're his——"

"Oh, yes," said the house-agent, "I know him."

"What is he like? What sort of a man is he?"

"Well," said the house-agent, "one hears different opinions, of course. As a landlord he seems to be quite satisfactory."

"I mean as a man? What sort of *man* is he?"

The house-agent rubbed his chin reflectively.

"You're asking rather a lot, you know. All I can tell you is that I've known him for some time, and he's always struck me as being not a bad sort of fellow, on the whole."

Anne sprang suddenly to her feet.

"You're wrong!" she cried fiercely.

"Lord Yendall's a beast and a brute and a cad! 'Not a bad sort of fellow'! He's the worst sort of fellow there is! That's like you men—to call a—beast like that 'not a bad sort of fellow'!"

The house-agent recoiled a step from the

flame of her wrath, the more startling in that it was so unexpected.

"Good Heavens!" he said. "As bad as all that? What's he done?"

"Done?" said Anne. "Done? He's only——" She stopped abruptly.

"Well?" said the house-agent.

But Anne, already vastly ashamed of her undisciplined outburst, had turned away and was staring out of the window. She spoke over her shoulder. "I'm sorry. I lost my temper. I oughtn't to speak like that about your—your employer. It doesn't matter, anyway. I'm sorry."

The house-agent studied her back for a moment in silence. Then he coughed gently.

"All right. Now, look here, have you had any tea? It's nearly half-past five."

"No. But I must be go——"

"Very well, then," said the house-agent briskly. "Nor have I. And my thirst at the moment is a thing to marvel at and envy. We'll have some here. In the kitchen there is a kettle and various gadgets of a supplementary nature, also one reliable gas-stove and any amount of water. I will entrust to you my only box of matches. If you will oblige by shoving on a kettle, I'll slide downstairs and separate some milk from the office. How does that go?"

"It's very kind of you," said Anne, smiling despite herself. "But I really ought to——" She paused, suddenly aware that of all things upon this earth a cup of tea was at the moment what she most desired.

"Oh, no" said the house-agent, "you can't go yet! There are a heap of things to be fixed up." He made for the door. "Back in four and a half minutes, or less with a fair wind and if that lift-boy is awake."

He vanished, but a second later his head reappeared in a disembodied manner round the door. "By the way, we ought to call each other something, don't you think? My name, I regret to say, is Smith—John Smith."

Anne smiled again. It was very difficult to remain depressed with the freckled-faced young man about the place.

"Thank you. Mine is Railton—Anne Railton."

The smile was banished suddenly from the house-agent's face.

"Railton?" he said thoughtfully. "Railton? That's curious——" He mused for a brief space. "However, milk's the first consideration. Good-bye for the moment."

He disappeared again, and Anne heard the door of the flat close after him.

She stood for a moment by the window, gazing out over the darkening roofs and smiling faintly. The freckled-faced young man's inconsequential babble had done much to restore her peace of mind, which, she realised, was probably precisely why he had behaved in that manner. He might be—and, indeed, was—an unusual species of house-agent, but he had not much to learn about tact.

She turned away from the window and made her way towards the kitchen. There she placed the kettle upon the stove and occupied herself in making ready for the house-agent's return. Involuntarily she smiled as she thought of him; the freckled-faced young man was an eminently likeable person, and the flat seemed unaccountably different in his absence. With a faint shock of genuine surprise at herself she realised that she was actually listening for his returning footstep. She had, however, no time to consider this phenomenon, for at that moment the kettle emitted a piercing whistle and began to boil furiously. Anne sprang forward and was in the act of lifting it from the stove when the front-door bell rang with startling vehemence.

Anne put down the kettle and hesitated. The bell clamoured again. She left the kitchen, crossed the hall, and opened the front door.

Outside stood a youth of about fifteen, wearing a peaked cap and an ornate blue livery. He touched his cap, grinned affably, and held out to her a large, square parcel.

"Thank yer," he said brightly. "Good afternoon."

He was moving briskly away when Anne called on him to halt.

"What is this, please? Who is it for?"

The youth turned and eyed her with obvious surprise.

"Cigars, they are. From Maddison an' Comp'ny. What was ordered yesterday."

"Yes, but—who are they for?"

The surprise deepened upon the youth's countenance.

"Why, fer Lord Yendall, miss!"

Anne started violently and stared at him.

"Lord Yendall! He—he doesn't live here!"

The youth uttered a plaintive sigh.

"'As 'e moved agen, then? 'E was 'ere yesterday, 'cos I seen 'im meself when I come an' 'e give me the order. D'yer know where 'e's gorn, miss?"

Anne steadied herself against the door-post.

"But—but this isn't Lord Yendall's flat. His is Number Sixteen."

"It useter be, up to a week ago. Then 'e moved up 'ere. I oughter know, seein' I call once a week meself. An' 'e was 'ere yesterday." His voice was tinged with vague suspicion; he spoke as one who, having a wide knowledge of the world, scents some species of confidence trick, and is prepared to stand very little nonsense. Perceiving that this peculiar lady was staring at him as if he were some kind of irreparable disaster, he judged it time to close the profitless discussion. "Well, I s'pose I'd best take 'em back to the shop, miss."

"Tell me," said Anne, somewhat unsteadily, "what is Lord Yendall like?"

Practically assured that he was dealing with either a lunatic or a criminal, the youth backed a step.

"'Im?" he answered, eyeing her warily. "Why, 'e's a great big feller. Tall, an' all that. Sandy 'air. Face all over freckles, an' smiles a lot. Gen'ally gives me a shillin'," he added, though not very hopefully.

With an immense effort, Anne, becoming conscious of the youth's curious eyes, pulled herself together. Mechanically she tendered the necessary largesse.

"Thank yer, miss," said the youth, his face brightening. "I s'pose I'd best take them cigars back."

"Yes, yes!" said Anne swiftly, thrusting the parcel at him. "And—and go away, please!"

The door closed abruptly. The youth gazed at it in an offended manner, spat thoughtfully on the shilling, and departed leisurely down the stairs, whistling through his teeth.

Anne, walking like one in a dream, returned to the sitting-room and crossed over to the window. Leaning against the frame, she looked out unseeingly over the city below, where little pin-points of flickering light were springing out one by one as the night drew on.

There, a few moments later, the freckled-faced young man came upon her. He wore his customary care-free smile; in one hand he bore a jug of milk and in the other a large paper bag.

"Sorry I've been so long. No milk downstairs, so I had to plunge out, and—what's the matter?"

Anne had turned at his entry and was

standing stiffly erect, her face white and her eyes blazing. But her voice was low and controlled.

"The matter is that I know who *you* are!" she said.

The young man started slightly.

"Oh, you do? How did you find out?"

"I *did* find out, anyway—Lord Yendall! John Smith—a good, useful name, Smith, isn't it? I suppose you won't deny now that this is *your* flat?"

The young man looked at her in silence. Then he carefully deposited the milk-jug and the paper bag upon the table.

"It *was*, certainly," he said. "It's yours now, you know."

"You seemed," went on Anne bitterly, "to know my name. Do you know now who I am? I'm Jean Railton's sister!"

The young man started again.

"Jean Railton! That's where I'd heard——"

"And," said Anne, drawing a step nearer, "I'll tell you why I'm here. Perhaps Jean told you about me—that I was a governess in Paris. When she became engaged to you she wrote me a letter that made me very—happy. She told me how you helped her in that railway accident, and came to see her afterwards, and how you didn't seem to mind our being poor, and a lot of other things. So I was glad, because Jean's never had much fun, and she—she worshipped you, though I didn't know you, or anything about you. Then, a week ago, I got another letter. She said that it—it was broken off, and that she didn't know—couldn't find out why. If you could have seen that letter, I think it might have worried even *you* for a little!"

She paused, fighting for breath.

"Go on," said the young man.

"It worried *me*, and I came straight over. But I—I couldn't do anything for Jean. She was just breaking her heart. I had to help her somehow, and I decided to come and see you and try to put things straight. Then, when I saw that flat advertised yesterday, I thought of another way. Jean told me you owned most of this part of London and lived here, and I thought that if I could take the flat for a little while, I'd be able to find out what sort of man you were before I spoke to you. If you were the kind of man I expected, I knew it would be better for Jean to forget all about you—if she could. Then I could just go away, and you'd never have known."

"I see. Well?"

"Well," said Anne fiercely, "now I *know* the sort of man you are! I know that you care so little about Jean that you can throw her aside like that, and then think it a splendid joke to pretend to be your own



"No milk downstairs, so I had to plunge out, and—what's the matter?"

house-agent and get me to take on your own flat, so that you could get to know me and—and amuse yourself with me as you did with her, I suppose! I'm glad this has happened—glad! I wouldn't let Jean come within a mile of you! Now let me go!"

She made towards the door, but he stepped before her, barring the way.

"One moment," he said calmly. "Have you seen your sister to-day?"

"This morning. And I'm going back to her now. You needn't be afraid that I'll tell her all about you. I'll manage to spare her that."

"Can you get her on the telephone?"

Anne stared at him blankly.

"Can you get her on the telephone?" he repeated.

"Yes, but——"

"Then ring her up now."

"I will not! Haven't you done enough——"

"Ring her up now. There's something you'll find out as soon as you get home.

Anne, surprised into silence, watched him walk away. For a moment she stood gazing in a bewildered manner at the closed door; then, still uncertainly, she turned to the little desk and picked up the telephone.



"The matter is that I know who you are!"

and I'd rather you found it out before you leave here. There's the telephone. I'll wait outside."

The freckled-faced young man was seated in the hall, placidly smoking a cigarette, when, five minutes later, the door opened

and Anne stood before him. Her face bore an expression of utter stupefaction, and she seemed temporarily bereft of the power of speech. The young man rose to his feet.

"Good!" he said. "You spoke to her?"

Anne made a little childish gesture of bewilderment.

"I—I don't understand. They told me that Lord Yendall called this morning just after I'd gone, with a—a special licence, and—and took her away to be married at once. He wouldn't let her wait—even for me."

"I'm sorry," said the young man. "He's a good chap, but he does do things on the jump. So," he added, "do I, for that matter."

"But I don't understand," said Anne again. "The boy described you so—if you're not Lord Yendall, who are you?"

"His brother," said the young man, the infectious grin breaking out again. "Smith really is the family name, you know. We're supposed to be very alike, because Jim's only ten minutes older than I am. Come and sit down, and I'll unravel it for you. Then we'll have that tea we spoke of."

He conducted the dazed Anne back to the sitting-room and urged her into the arm-chair. He pulled another to her side and smiled down at her.

"It's like this," he said. "Jim's nearest relative—and mine—is an aunt for whom neither of us, I'm afraid, has any great affection. When Jim got engaged to your sister—I've met her, by the way, and I think Jim's shown some sense for about the first time in his life—the aunt was furious, because it appears she'd set her heart on another arrangement altogether. So she began deliberately to make mischief. One hates to say it, but it's true. I don't know how she did it, but she was so successful that she managed to get Jim to break off

the engagement. Directly he'd done it he was sorry, and last night he found out how he'd been fooled. The result you know. Don't—don't blame him more than you can help, because he's absolutely devoted to your sister."

There was a little pause. Then:

"So that was it!" said Anne. Suddenly she blushed furiously. "Oh, what must you think of me? To say what I did without making sure——"

"That's all right," said the freckled-faced young man hurriedly. "If I'd been the kind of tike you thought I was, I'd have deserved it." He stopped abruptly; an unwonted embarrassment took possession of his cheerful countenance. "And, anyway, part of it was—was true. At least, this *is* my flat. Jim's been staying up here for a week while his own is being done up. And that bit about my pretending to—to be the agent. I happened to be in the office, you see, and when you came in I—I—well, dash it all, I thought—I sort of wanted to know you—and you seemed so keen on getting a flat here. And I'm going away to-morrow for a month—at least, I *was*—so the place was all cleaned up, and there seemed no harm. I'm most awfully sorry——" His voice dwindled and died; he sat watching her with an almost feverish anxiety.

Anne studied him gravely for possibly ten seconds. Then a smile broke over her face, a smile that for care-free gaiety well-nigh rivalled one of his own.

"Wasn't there some talk of tea?" she said.

* * * * *

Lady Yendall is completely satisfied with Number Sixteen. But she is quite prepared to admit that her sister, who dwells two floors higher up, has a much finer view and almost as fine a husband.



THE REVENANT

By C. KENNETT BURROW

ILLUSTRATED BY EMILE VERPILLEUX

"WHERE is Jacques?"

Hélène Remuet burst upon Madame Blanchefleur in a whirl of agitation: from her beautifully-modelled shoes to the dangling decoration in her hat she seemed to suggest a complete gesture of interrogation.

"You are very pretty," said Madame Blanchefleur. "Yes, you are very pretty, but also a little absurd. How is your dear friend the parrot?"

"My enemy the parrot has gone. I have given it to my dresser. The creature was removed this morning. But what do you know about that insufferable bird?"

"I understood from Jacques that you adored it."

"So Jacques came to you with his complaints? That is what I guessed. Natalie, where is he?"

"At this moment I imagine that he is at the Château Drusillon. I left him there last night."

"At the home of Dr. Bourdon?"

"Yes. The poor fellow was distracted and needed a change. . . . And now, Hélène, where is Dr. Bourdon?"

"I have not seen him for a month. . . . You are not looking yourself, Natalie."

"That is because I did not reach Paris till two o'clock this morning," said Madame Blanchefleur.

"Why did you run away from the Château Drusillon?"

"Because, my child, the person whom I sought was not there."

"Dr. Bourdon?"

"Sylvestre, yes," said Madame Blanchefleur.

Hélène crossed over to Madame Blanchefleur, kissed her, and then knelt beside her chair. "My dear Natalie," she said, gazing into Madame Blanchefleur's eyes with an expression of tender wisdom, "it is the most foolish thing in the world to quarrel with—"

Madame Blanchefleur laughed with a subdued merriment that had in it a touch

of sadness. "From you, Hélène, that sounds fantastic!"

"I am only repeating what you have said to me a score of times."

"But I have not quarrelled with Sylvestre," Madame Blanchefleur insisted.

"Then why does he run away from you?"

"I did not say that he had run away."

"But you suspect it?"

"I suspect myself of having been a fool," said Madame Blanchefleur.

"No doubt," said Hélène, with a consolatory smile, "Dr. Bourdon is sometimes a little difficult."

"He is not in the least difficult."

"Then perhaps you yourself—"

"I admit it," said Madame Blanchefleur. She embraced Hélène, kissing her eyelids as a mother or a lover might have done, and then rose, at the same time helping Hélène to her feet.

"I am going," she said, "to Arnaud Dorain. He is a magician when he chooses. Will you wait here till I return?"

"Yes, yes. I have nothing whatever to do. The Théâtre Racine is closed for a week at least. The proscenium arch has been cracked by Brule's voice, and must be repaired."

"Ah, that Brule!" cried Madame Blanchefleur. "I have done with Brule!"

"Do you mean that?" Hélène demanded. "No, you cannot mean it!"

"Nevertheless, I do. However, we will not waste time over Brule." She left Hélène in a condition of excitement and perplexity which impelled that impulsive little lady to a restless pacing of the room.

That morning Arnaud Dorain was in a greyer mood than when Madame Blanchefleur had seen him three days before. His last romance, as the opening chapters grew under his hand, aroused too many memories. It is one thing to contemplate the past through a softening haze of recollection, quite another thing to revivify it with the candour and passion of an artist. Dorain

became more conscious of physical infirmity in that reconstruction and interpretation of life at flood. But this roused no futile resentment; it only made him aware of a weariness which called for rest, though it was a rest not yet desired.

Ninon, his housekeeper, came into his study and announced:

"The lady, monsieur, who calls herself Madame Blanchefleur."

"And what the devil would it matter," Dorain asked, with a touch of irritability, "if she chose to call herself Madame la Comtesse de Roche-Jaquin, or anything else?"

"No doubt, monsieur, she has played many parts," said Ninon. "All the world—even such as I—goes to the Théâtre Racine. You have sent me there yourself."

"She has played many parts, my good Ninon, but she is always herself. Can that be said of you or, indeed, of any other woman?"

"I protest to you, monsieur, that I am always the same—plain Ninon Clapart, born Clouet of Guérande."

"Well, well, do not keep Madame Blanchefleur waiting. Off with you, incomparable one!"

A moment later Madame Blanchefleur stood before him.

"You come," he said, "as quietly as a shadow or a sunray. Which is it?"

"Dear master, I am neither."

"What is the trouble now?" Dorain asked.

"Have you any news of Sylvestre?"

"He is at the Château Drusillon." Madame Blanchefleur sat down, not heavily, for she was incapable of that, but with a decisiveness which suggested that more than moral support was demanded. Astonishment, perplexity, almost dismay, were shot at Dorain from her appealing eyes.

"But," she said, "I do not understand. Only last night I was at the Château Drusillon. I left at half-past ten, after having relieved that house of the insufferable presence of the Fablons."

"Then once again you have played the unrehearsed part of a special Providence. If you had come to me, as I suggested, I could have explained the situation; but instead of that, you go flying off in pursuit of Sylvestre and miss him, after all."

"I object to that word 'pursuit,'" said Madame Blanchefleur. "However, I am prepared for your reproaches."

"My dear child, I do not reproach. At my age a man with any sense remaining does not even reproach himself. If repentance is to be worth anything—and at best it is a form of self-pity—it should come in youth and hot blood. . . . But let me explain."

"That is what I am waiting for," said Madame Blanchefleur. "I am more eager for an explanation than a cat for milk."

"Our good doctor decided that he would not leave Paris. After all, a man may rest as well in Paris as in the country, provided he can escape from his immediate work and surroundings. Besides, I have a fancy that Sylvestre did not wish to remove himself too far from Madame Blanchefleur. At any rate, I put at his disposal those old rooms of mine which I have retained because they seemed to hold my vanished youth." He added, after a moment's pause: "My experience of life has not killed sentiment. But I become too contemplative. Sylvestre had been in possession of those rooms for no more than a few hours when he sent a messenger to his own quarters for letters. That was foolish. One of those letters was from Madame Bourdon."

"I have heard of that," said Madame Blanchefleur. "And when he arrived at the Château Drusillon—we must have passed each other on the road—he would discover that I, the forsaken one, had acted as his deputy, invented a *revenant*, and scared Monsieur and Madame Fablon, Barbe, and the dogs into sudden flight."

"Sylvestre would never have invented a *revenant*," said Dorain, with a smile that flickered for an instant about eyes and lips. "No, he would never have invented a *revenant*. He has immense courage, but he lacks the imagination for that."

"But surely he has imagination?"

"Not of that kind," said Dorain. "A physician with too much imagination would be a danger to society."

"No doubt," said Madame Blanchefleur. After a long pause, during which Dorain took up his pen—it was a quill—and laid it down again, she said:

"The situation would be almost grotesque if one were not involved in it."

"But being deeply involved in it—being, in fact, the very heart and core of it—you find it more serious than grotesque."

"You are unsympathetic to-day!" cried Madame Blanchefleur.

"On the contrary, I am full of sympathy for all the world."

"Of what use is that?"

"The question strikes home," said Dorain.

"Yes, it strikes home. I have often asked myself whether diffusive sympathy is of any value, whether it must not always be exercised individually."

Madame Blancheffleur became all penitence; tears burned in her eyes. "Dear master, I spoke selfishly, without thought. Forgive me. You have never failed in sympathy to me."

"Well, well, I hope I never shall. But to return to this situation."

quarrelled with Hélène Remuet—about a parrot—and was ready for any adventure."

Dorain stroked the side of his nose softly and smiled. "Kingdoms have been lost for less reason than a parrot," he said.

"Hélène," Madame Blancheffleur said, answering the smile, "is now waiting impatiently for my return. The offending parrot has been dismissed."

"She knows that Jacques is at the Château Drusillon?"

"She knows that he was there last night."

"Why not telephone?"



"An old lady who might have stepped straight from a travelling-carriage to a Paris pavement at about the period of the *coup d'état*. . . . By her side stood a somewhat younger woman in an attitude that suggested a respect approaching reverence."

"It is complicated by the fact that Jacques Coriot is also at the Château Drusillon."

"That young man," said Dorain, "has admirable qualities and a touch of genius, but he will always be in some kind of difficulty. At the same time he will never be unhappy for long, and he will always manage to keep afloat. What is he doing at the Château Drusillon?"

"I took him with me because he had

"A reconciliation over the telephone!" cried Madame Blancheffleur. "That would not appeal to Hélène."

"I suppose not. Nor, I imagine, would it appeal to you."

"There is no question of reconciliation in my case," said Madame Blancheffleur. "If there were, the matter would be simple."

Dorain nodded. "You have made up your mind absolutely at last?"

"Absolutely. But it may be too late."

"I think not, my child. What will not a man endure for a woman? Only a little less, perhaps, than a woman will endure for a man."

"What am I to do?" Madame Blanchefleur asked the question with the eager simplicity of a child.

"We may assume, I imagine, that Sylvestre will remain at the Château Drusillon for a few days at least, and no doubt he will persuade Jacques to remain also. Does that suggest to you—you who have imagination—any possibilities? Go over carefully in your mind all the circumstances of your visit, every detail, not forgetting the dismissal of the Fablons."

Dorain watched Madame Blanchefleur with an expression of such complete confidence that the light which suddenly dawned in her eyes seemed to be born directly of that inspiring confidence as colour is born of the sun. Madame Blanchefleur's lips parted; her breath came quickly; for a moment she had the pose and look of one suddenly inspired.

"Ah," said Dorain, "you have an idea?"

Madame Blanchefleur rose and stood beside him, resting a hand upon his shoulder.

"Yes, an idea," she said.

"May I ask what it is?"

"Will you allow me to keep it a secret? Because, if it failed——"

"Oh, it will not fail. But by all means keep it a secret. I only stipulate that you let me know the result. If I am not inquisitive as to the means, I shall be impatient to know the end. And impatience is distressing to an old man who is trying to write his last romance."

"You are at work on it, dear master?"

"Yes, though I once told you that I should write no more romances. I am almost inclined to destroy what I have already written, fold my hands, and rest. It is painful, Natalie, to dig about the roots of one's own heart. And yet I should like to leave a last word that is entirely simple, something that even the foolish could understand."

"If it means suffering to you, abandon it," said Madame Blanchefleur.

"Would not that be to admit defeat, the thing which I have always refused to admit? However, leave me to decide that for myself. You are concerned with the future. Run to meet it!"

"You shall have news, perhaps, before you expect it. This may be my last adventure."

"There will be others," Dorain said, smiling. "So long as the heart beats there is no end to adventure, and when it beats no longer there may be—more adventure." Madame Blanchefleur raised his hands to her lips—hands so slim and delicate that her own seemed too crudely virile—and left him.

"She is all woman now," Dorain said to himself. Then he turned again to his manuscript.

Madame Blanchefleur returned to Hélène, whom she found with one of Arnaud Dorain's books open on her lap.

"Confess," cried Madame Blanchefleur, "that you have not read a word!"

"I have read, but without comprehending."

"And yet he is not difficult."

"He is too big, too detached, for a small brain in a fever."

"Close the book and listen to me," said Madame Blanchefleur.

Hélène listened, laughed, clapped her hands, executed a dance which, oddly enough, did not seem inappropriate, and then, with a gesture of despair, she subsided with infinite grace on to a couch.

"It is beautiful, beautiful!" she said.

"But, my dearest Natalie, it is impossible!"

"My dearest Hélène," said Madame Blanchefleur, "I assure you that it is not impossible."

"Not for you, perhaps, but for me——"

Madame Blanchefleur sat down beside her. "Now," she said, "look me in the eyes, straight in the eyes."

Hélène obeyed. "If you hypnotise me," she wailed, "I shall be useless for a week."

"Be sensible, child. Control yourself."

"That is precisely what I cannot do."

"Nonsense!" said Madame Blanchefleur.

"You can control yourself on the stage."

"Where nothing matters, nothing is unexpected, and where one is merely someone else."

"If that is all," said Madame Blanchefleur, "you have learnt very little of your art. But you know that it is not all. . . . Take courage. What I have proposed is not impossible. And even if we fail——"

"For Heaven's sake, do not speak of failure!"

"That is better," said Madame Blanchefleur. "Follow my instructions and return in an hour."

"You compel me to submit," Hélène sighed. And on the breath of that sigh, as

it were, she vanished noiselessly from the room.

II.

EMILE BOURDON, sitting alone in his library at the Château Drusillon, was filled with a great contentment; he was at peace with himself and with the world. His own beloved house had, as by a miracle, been restored to him by the sudden intervention of Madame Blanche fleur and Jacques Coriot. And what an extraordinary ruse they had employed! To crown Emile's content, Sylvestre had arrived to find the Fablon difficulty solved. What more, he asked himself, could a man desire?

Bourdon was not a person addicted to profound contemplation; he was no searcher of the human heart, no experimentalist of the emotions. He had always taken the world as he had found it, and he had always—save for an occasional experience of the aberrations of others—found it good. Perhaps his love of his vineyards had almost approached idolatry. It was a love unassociated with the wealth which they had brought him; he would not have loved them less if towards the close of life he had found himself reduced to a vine-tender's cottage and a peasant's fare. And now, looking back upon that life, so orderly, so successful, he was wrapped in a profound thankfulness. Those who knew him best would have said of him that he was kind, generous, quick in sympathy, ardent and unshakable in friendship. He saw in himself only a singularly fortunate individual who had been given a hundredfold more than he deserved.

The first faint obscurity of twilight was encroaching on the Château Drusillon. The place was as quiet as a locked church. Sylvestre and Coriot had gone to Dormette to bring back with them the lawyer Maribot, who had been so faithful a host during the Bourdons' exile. Madame Bourdon, after superintending the arrangements for a majestic dinner, had retired for an hour's repose.

Carefully and almost stealthily, as though fearful of disturbing the stillness, Bourdon placed another log on the fire. Then he closed his eyes, and on the confines of slumber there drifted before his mental vision pictures of vineyards, from the unfolding of the bud, through fruitage and harvesting, to the falling of the leaf and the season of mists. It was so quiet that he fancied he could hear the rustling of the dead leaves, like the sound of distant surf,

rising from the broad valley like a litany of autumn.

He was startled from that dream-reverie by a different and nearer sound—that of a tapping, low but distinct, at the front door. It was like the cautious knocking of a nervous child: no one in the house save himself could possibly hear it. He was on the point of ringing for a servant when the knocking was repeated. It appealed to him curiously as a pleading voice might have done. He crossed the hall on tiptoe and opened the door.

"This is the Château Drusillon, is it not?"

"Undoubtedly," said Bourdon.

"And you are M. Emile Bourdon?"

"Undoubtedly," Bourdon repeated in a bewildered tone. And there was, indeed, cause for bewilderment. No child stood before him, but an old lady who might have stepped straight from a travelling-carriage to a Paris pavement at about the period of the *coup d'état*. That, at any rate, was how she struck Bourdon. By her side stood a somewhat younger woman in an attitude that suggested a respect approaching reverence.

"I am Madame Chénier," said the old lady, "and this is my friend and companion, Mademoiselle Girardin." Bourdon bowed in great perplexity. "This call," continued Madame Chénier, "is unconventional, but I am not in the habit, monsieur, of waiting on ceremony. As a neighbour I felt it both my duty and my pleasure to make the first approaches."

In still greater perplexity Bourdon bowed again and invited the strange visitors to enter. He led them to the library because he wished, if possible, to discover more about them before summoning his wife. Henriette's drawing-room was a sanctuary not to be profaned, and these people might be undesirable. Yet the clear, low-toned, and slightly tremulous voice of Madame Chénier had an accent both of refinement and authority, and even in her age she retained a beauty that stirred vague memories in Bourdon's breast.

"I will presently," he said, "summon Madame Bourdon. She is resting; she has had a tiring day."

"We are in no hurry, monsieur," said Madame Chénier, who had taken a seat with her back to the light. There was a kind of finality about this remark which would have seemed dictatorial if the speaker's voice had not touched a note of weariness.

Bourdon furtively scratched his head and glanced at Mademoiselle Girardin as though seeking some explanation from her. Then for the first time she spoke.

"It is true, monsieur, that we are in no hurry. To Madame Chénier and myself time is of no account." The words were so clearly spoken that it seemed odd to Bourdon that they should sound so far away. They might have come from his own vineyards, out there in the twilight.

"I am myself approaching that happy condition," he said, and his own voice also seemed very far away.

"You? You, monsieur, who are alive and have about you all this wonderful world?" These words, spoken by Madame Chénier, had a curious and remote music. Bourdon felt that soon he would be the victim of some spell—a happy victim, with recollections only of the budding time of vines, of Henriette as a bride, of Sylvestre as a tiny and disquieting atom that yet had revealed to him the meaning of life. He recovered himself with an effort.

"It is true, madame, that I am alive," he said. "And the vineyards, they are also alive. . . . For how long have you been a neighbour?"

"Have you ever heard of Dormette?"

"You might as well ask me whether I have heard of Paris. I know everybody in Dormette, or at least until this moment I thought I knew. Is it possible that so distinguished a lady as yourself should have taken a residence in Dormette, or within a dozen miles of it, and I remain in ignorance? Is it possible——" Bourdon paused.

"Many things are possible, monsieur, that are regarded as impossible," Madame Chénier said. "Human knowledge is limited: it is left to higher intelligences to discover absolute truth."

"That may be so—as a man of sincere religious faith I admit it. . . . But in the matter of Dormette, Maribot—he is a lawyer, madame—and myself may claim to have complete knowledge."

"Of the houses, the garden walls, the little farms?"

"Yes, yes," said Bourdon, "of everything."

"Have you discovered the real soul of Dormette?" The words fell so quietly and with so delicate a rhythm that Bourdon again thought of his vineyards and the twilight. Was Madame Chénier's voice of this world at all? "The real soul of

Dormette!" Had he been so immersed in his own affairs that he had missed, perhaps lost for ever, all that Madame Chénier's question implied.

"I cannot say that I have made that discovery," he said. "But let us," he added with a touch almost of desperation, "return to realities. May I ask, without indiscretion, where you have taken up your residence?"

For a moment Madame Chénier did not reply. She and Mademoiselle Girardin sat so perfectly still that Bourdon had the uneasy fancy that they were not there at all, that he was in some strange dream. He pinched his arm sharply to reassure himself. Then Madame Chénier said:

"Have you ever heard, monsieur, of the Villa Desirée?"

"In or near Dormette? Never, madame. But possibly you have given a new name to an old house, though I cannot think of one in Dormette that the name would fit."

"Come, come, monsieur, you are too critical. Is not every happy home, even the humblest, a Villa Desirée? Is not the Château Drusillon the Château Desiré?"

"In a sense, yes," said Bourdon, fumbling with his fingers like a nervous boy. "But this particular house you speak of——"

"And if, monsieur, we possess no actual Villa Desirée," Madame Chénier continued, "do we not build one for ourselves? Is it not that house of dreams which the spirit may inhabit, subject to no change or decay?"

"Yes, yes, the house of dreams." Bourdon felt a strange exaltation, as though he had suddenly discovered in himself some new perception. But that feeling almost immediately gave place to one of perturbation and a most singular and disquieting sense of unreality. Madame Chénier was evading him. Where was this Villa Desirée, the house of fact, not the house of dream? She had spoken of the Château Drusillon as the Château Desiré, and that, it was true, was near Dormette. Was it possible that this lady, who had tapped so softly at his door, who seemed to come from another world. . . .

Bourdon rose. "Madame," he said, "if you will excuse me for a moment, I will now summon Madame Bourdon."

As he closed the door of the library behind him—and he closed it warily, as though fearing to disturb a sleeping child—he saw Henriette coming down the stairs, and at the same moment voices sounded without.

"My soul," he said, "two remarkable ladies have called—Madame Chénier and Mademoiselle Girardin. I confess that I can make nothing of them except that they are of the utmost refinement. You, with your tact, will succeed better than I. I will leave you with them. I must speak to Sylvestre and the others at once."

"What has come over you, Emile? Why are you so flurried?"

"It is nothing, nothing."

Bourdon opened the library door. The visitors had risen and were looking out of the window, though they stood at some distance from it. Perhaps they also had heard the voices. Bourdon made hurried introductions and returned to the hall just as Sylvestre, Jacques Coriot, and Maribot came in.

"We have brought with us the wise man of Dormette," said Sylvestre.

Bourdon held up his hand for silence, and beckoned the three towards the drawing-room. He walked on tiptoe, as he had done when he answered the light knocking half an hour before. The others imitated him instinctively.

When they were all safely in the drawing-room and the door closed, Bourdon stood silent.

"What is all this?" Sylvestre asked.

"Has something happened?"

"As to that," said Bourdon, "you shall hear." He turned to Maribot and laid a hand on his shoulder. "Aristide, is there a Villa Desirée in or near Dormette?"

"Certainly not. But why ask me? You know there is not."

"I will tell you why I ask. Come to the fire, all of you."

They grouped themselves about the fireplace, Bourdon standing, the others sitting. Coriot glanced from his host to Maribot, and checked a desire to smile at the extraordinary seriousness of the two old friends about a trifle. Sylvestre also looked serious.

"Well?" said the lawyer.

"This afternoon," Bourdon said, "as I was on the point of dozing, I heard a tapping at the front door. It was timid, like a child's. For that reason it attracted me, and I went to the door myself." He paused to make sure that he had the attentions of his auditors: he was conscious of a certain awed importance.

"Well?" Maribot repeated. "What did you see?"

"Two ladies who seemed not to belong to our time. The elder is Madame Chénier,

the younger Mademoiselle Girardin. They had called to pay a neighbourly visit. I invited them into the library."

"I never heard of these neighbours," said Maribot.

"Precisely, my friend, nor had I. I made cautious inquiries as to their residence, and Madame Chénier spoke of Dormette and the Villa Desirée."

"This is nonsense," said Maribot.

"Did she become more definite?" Sylvestre asked.

"She spoke movingly of the Villa Desirée as a house of dreams, and added that the Château Drusillon was, in effect, the Château Desiré."

"A pretty fancy," said Coriot.

"The lady may be suffering from some delusion," Sylvestre said. "The case is interesting."

"What do you make of it yourself, Emile?" Maribot asked.

Bourdon shifted uneasily on his feet, smiled apologetically, and then became portentously grave. "I almost hesitate to say. Yet the idea occurred to me——"

"For Heaven's sake," cried Maribot, "let us have it! An idea has also occurred to me."

"Then speak, Aristide."

"On no account, Emile, till you have spoken."

"You must consider," Bourdon went on, "the strangeness of the situation—these unknown ladies stepping, as it were, out of the past, who claimed to be neighbours; the talk of the Villa Desirée, Mademoiselle Girardin's remark that time to them was of no account——"

"Yes, yes," Maribot interrupted eagerly.

"Considering all that, you will perhaps not be surprised that there leapt into my mind the story of the *revenant* which our admirable friend Madame Blanchefleur invented for the discomfiture of the Fablons."

"Ah!" said Maribot.

"But——" This came from Coriot.

"One moment," said Bourdon. "I do not suggest that the strength of Madame Blanchefleur's imagination could actually create this *revenant*. But suppose that such a thing really existed. . . . How shall I make my meaning clear?"

"Permit me," said Maribot, who could restrain himself no longer, "to assist you. Suppose that Madame Blanchefleur had, with the intuition of genius, hit upon a truth unrevealed to others: suppose, in short, that the Château Drusillon does

possess a hitherto unknown *revenant*—might not that offended spirit appear as a justification of itself?"

"You put it admirably, Aristide," said Bourdon.

Coriot gasped. "But have not these ladies natural bodies and human voices?" he asked. "What does our great doctor think of all this?"

"I think," said Sylvestre, "that the theory is ingenious, and so many strange things have come within my experience that I reject nothing as impossible. But I require evidence. Where are these ladies?"

"In the library," said Bourdon. "Your mother is with them."

"They do not seem to have alarmed her."

"I assure you, Sylvestre, that I was not—I am not—alarmed. On the contrary, I was touched by the most delicate emotion."

"Nevertheless," said Sylvestre, with a smile, "would it not be well to see what has happened?"

"Happened! Sacred Heaven!" cried Bourdon. "Do you imagine that I would have exposed Henriette, your mother, to any danger?"

"Go to her, then," said Sylvestre, "and bring her and the mysterious ladies into the council chamber."

Bourdon left the room hurriedly. The three who remained stared into the red heart of the fire as though they wished to avoid looking at each other.

"When I crossed the threshold," said Maribot in a whisper, "I felt something strange."

"And I also," said Sylvestre.

"What, you too!" Coriot cried. "Why am I so completely outside this wonderful experience?"

"Perhaps, my friend," said Sylvestre, "it is because——"



"Towards the far end of the room . . . Madame Bourdon and Hélène Remnet."

The reason was never stated, for Bourdon abruptly re-entered the room.

"They have gone!" he announced. "The library is empty."

His statement had the tone of a bewildered appeal.

"But Madame Bourdon?" cried Maribot. "Have they taken her with them?"

"She is not there!"

"This is absurd," said Sylvestre. "I was prepared to be impressed by Madame

left open, switched on the lights and revealed a group which, with the exception of Coriot, had suddenly become shamefaced. Madame Bourdon glanced at each in turn and then addressed her husband.

"Confess, Emile," she said, "that you were afraid of those poor ladies."



"I submit—that is, if you desire my submission."

"Not afraid, my soul—I assure you not afraid!"

"Your flight—yes, your flight—distressed Madame Chénier deeply. She knew that you had gone to discuss her and her companion with people who might understand her better than yourself."

"I was confused," said Bourdon helplessly.

"Because she spoke of the Villa Desirée?"

Chénier, but now—why, we are like puppets in a farce!"

"Precisely," said Coriot.

"I will go in search of Henriette," said Bourdon.

"There is no need, Emile. She is here." Madame Bourdon, as she passed through the door which Bourdon had

"There was more than that—something——"

"I am ashamed of you," said Madame Bourdon. "I never before knew you to do discredit to the Château Drusillon."

Poor Bourdon was overwhelmed. At the moment protest was useless.

"Well, well, little mother," Sylvestre said, "we cannot all have your sympathy and understanding."

She went to him, put her hands upon his shoulders, and kissed him. There was a wonderful light in her eyes. "My son!" she murmured. "And now, all of you, go to the library. I have work to do here and must be left alone."

They filed obediently from the room and crossed once more to the library.

"That is the chair in which Madame Chénier sat," said Bourdon, pointing with an energetic forefinger, "and in the chair on the left sat her companion, Mademoiselle Girardin."

Maribot examined the chairs as though he expected to find something extraordinary about them. "How is it," said the lawyer, "that we, who were so silent, did not hear them depart? How is it——" He stooped and picked from the floor a little silk tassel. "What is this, Emile?"

"There were things like that on the pelisse worn by Madame Chénier."

"Well, that is real enough, anyway," said Coriot. The trifle passed from hand to hand as though it were a jewel of price.

"As you say, Jacques, this is real enough," Sylvestre said, and he slipped the tassel into his pocket.

"It is a thousand pities," said Coriot, "that Madame Blanchefleur is not here. She could solve this problem."

"But are we sure that there is any problem to be solved?" Sylvestre asked.

"The Villa Desirée!" said Bourdon. Maribot repeated the words like a disconsolate echo.

The sound of a piano, very softly played, reached the library.

Bourdon leapt to his feet.

"What is that?" he cried. "Henriette cannot play a note. . . . This house is possessed!"

Sylvestre went to the door, opened it, and stood listening. It was as though the Château Drusillon had suddenly become filled with music, as though the soul of the place had found a tongue. And then a

voice, firm yet infinitely tender, rose as on lifting wings:

No freedom lives save in love's golden bars:
Love's splendid lure
Blinds, only to reveal the constant stars
Whose path is sure.

Submit, O heart, to bondage that makes free,
To love's control,
Lest, self-consumed, thou lovest utterly
Life's only goal.

A moment's profound silence followed. Then Sylvestre, who had remained motionless during the singing, crossed quickly to the drawing-room.

As he entered, Madame Blanchefleur rose from the music-stool and stood erect, facing him. Both challenge and pleading were in her eyes, an expression that shook his self-command.

"I knew, Natalie," he said, "that there was only one voice in France like that."

"And it sang," she said, "for you." He took her hands, holding her from him a little. Then for a moment he bowed his head.

"Yes," she said, "I submit—that is, if you desire my submission—and before witnesses."

"Desire it? Witnesses?"

"My dear Sylvestre, have you no eyes?"

"Only for you," he said. Sylvestre, following her glance towards the far end of the room, saw as through a mist Madame Bourdon and Hélène Remuet. Madame Bourdon, it must be confessed, had had the greatest difficulty in controlling herself. At this point she abandoned the effort, ran to Sylvestre, flung her arms round him and wept joyful tears.

"This dear Natalie," she sobbed, "I could hardly believe it at first, but——"

"Is Madame Chénier?" said Sylvestre. He took the little silk tassel from his pocket and dangled it before Madame Blanchefleur.

"Is that yours, madame?"

"It certainly came from Madame Chénier's pelisse," said Madame Blanchefleur. "That lady, however, has vanished. La Fadette has played her last part. Below Madame Chénier's elegant attire was Madame Blanchefleur as you see her now. I intended to carry the matter further, but the *revenant* could not keep it up. When your mother came to me I confessed."

"If you had not," said Madame Bourdon, "be sure that I should have made the discovery within two minutes."

Hélène, who had been hovering impatiently in the background, now made a dart forward.

"Dr. Bourdon," she cried, "you have won—you deserved to win. But how about the unhappy Mademoiselle Girardin? In Heaven's name, where is Jacques?"

"Forgive me," said Sylvestre. "Would you prefer to see Jacques alone?"

"My good doctor, I do not demand a privilege not accorded to you. No, that runaway shall be humiliated in public."

"Humiliated?" said Madame Bourdon. "Child, do not talk of humiliating the man you love!"

"He needs a lesson," Hélène protested.

"And you, of course, do not," said Madame Bourdon drily. "Sylvestre, call the others."

He opened the door to find them in the hall, apparently holding a consultation as to whether they should make a bold advance or retreat once more.

"Madame Chénier and Mademoiselle Girardin," said Sylvestre, "desire to see you all. . . . Do not hesitate, M. Maribot."

"Hesitate? I am all eagerness," Maribot said. "You go first, Emile."

Each paused as he entered. There was Madame Bourdon, smiling, substantial, unmistakable, but where were the mysterious ladies?

"Ah, you men," said Madame Bourdon, "you men that have no faith! These are the ladies of the Villa Desirée." And from the shadow of a recess Madame Blanchefleur and Hélène stepped out into the light.

"I guessed it!" gasped Bourdon. "Yes, I guessed it!"

"Permit me to say, Emile," said Maribot, "that you did nothing of the kind. What about the *revenant*?"

"As for me," said Coriot, "I suppose if I said that I knew it all the time no one would believe me." He advanced to Hélène, took her hands and said: "I forgive you."

"You forgive me?"

"Yes—even the parrot," he said.

Bourdon scratched his head, straightened himself, cleared his throat and advanced his right foot.

"Not a speech, Emile!" Henriette cried.

"My soul," said Bourdon, "permit me to do my duty. . . . Madame Blanchefleur, you have returned to the Château Drusillon like—like light. The Fablons fled before you like shadows. As Madame Chénier—it was a wonderful disguise—you revealed to me that the Villa Desirée is—is, in effect, any home in which love and understanding"—his voice failed for a moment—"in which love and understanding

unite. . . . Madame, amongst your many triumphs count as not least the devotion—the devotion, I repeat, which we of the Château Drusillon lay at your feet."

"Bravo!" Maribot murmured.

"I believe," Madame Blanchefleur said very quietly, with her eyes on Sylvestre, "that it is the only triumph which has brought me complete happiness. For the future I become myself only—a woman without disguise. As I have already told Dr. Bourdon, the part of that poor *revenant*, Madame Chénier, was my last creation."

* * * * *

On the afternoon of the following day Ninon laboured up the stairs to Arnaud Dorain's study and said:

"The lady, monsieur, who calls herself Madame Blanchefleur."

"Already?" said Dorain. "Very well, my good Ninon, I will see her at once." He rose slowly and stood waiting. One side of his face was flushed with the glow of the fire, the other grey in the sunless and sullen light of the misty afternoon. The compressed lips, the unwavering eyes, the attentive attitude of body, suggested an almost rapt expectancy.

"Well, my child?" he said as Madame Blanchefleur entered.

"I have surrendered," she said.

"Ah! You found, then, that I was right?"

"You are always right, dear master."

"Sit beside me," he said. "Let us turn our backs on the grey world outside. There is more truth in flame than in mist." Madame Blanchefleur drew a stool close to Dorain's working-chair—an austere and cushionless chair that had come from a Breton farmhouse—and seated herself at his feet. "Now," he said, "tell me what happened at the Château Drusillon."

"You guessed that I had gone there?"

"Naturally. I may claim that I suggested it." Madame Blanchefleur told him the story briefly.

"It was a daring idea," he said, "and the Villa Desirée was an excellent invention. No doubt Madame Chénier was a most imposing *revenant*. . . . You have decided to vanish from the stage, to leave the Théâtre Racine for ever?"

"Yes."

"It is an enormous sacrifice, my child," Dorain said, "and there have been times when I feared that you would never make it. Why, you may ask, did I wish you to

make it? You have genius, beauty, the world is at your feet. But I saw in you a finer genius that could not, I imagined, reach complete fruition in an atmosphere of the artificial and the grotesque. For some women it is perhaps neither the one nor the other. I would not, for example, counsel Hélène Remuet to abandon the stage. But you——” Dorain paused and laid a hand on Madame Blanchefleur’s bowed head.

“But I?”

“You have a genius of absolute womanhood, a genius of love. You were never satisfied with your work, you became more and more restless, you were conscious of waste.”

“That is true,” said Madame Blanchefleur.

“All that will pass.”

“It has already passed.”

“And you are not afraid of a tame ending?”

“I have no fear at all.”

“Then,” said Dorain, “my last fear has also vanished. I can await the end—for my time grows short—without dread for you. . . . You were always, I think, my spiritual child. I have watched over you, Natalie, with the tenderest affection, and you have revealed to me the heart and soul of—Madame Blanchefleur.”

Ninon abruptly announced Dr. Sylvestre Bourden. Madame Blanchefleur rose as he entered.

“She must be permitted,” said Dorain, “to retain one part, which is indeed herself—that of Madame Blanchefleur.”



JUNE.

EIGHTEEN miles from London Town
 Summer sits in the heart of a wood.
 Eighteen miles from London Town,
 But a world away from its servitude.

Deep blue sky where green branches sway
 On the idle, wandering airs that stray
 Down mazy paths where heat-waves quiver
 Over the gleam of a tiny river—
 Only the wood-doves' lazy croon
 Speaks to the world of the peace of June—

Eighteen miles from London Town,
 But all the world away.

AGNES-MARY LAWRENCE.

"ONCE AN ACTOR. . . ."

THE TRUE HISTORY OF A PERFORMING SEA-LION

By L. R. BRIGHTWELL, F.Z.S.

Illustrated by the Author

A FAMOUS humorist once compared the sea-lion to "a slug in a fur overcoat."

The simile is apt enough up to a point, but it totally ignores the more than canine sagacity of the sea-lion, and the lustrous beauty of his all-expressive eye. Hookey had the alert brain, brilliant eye, slug-like sheen, and the fur overcoat. He had a voice as well. His owner declared it was worth twenty pounds a week as an advertisement, even in slack seasons. There was no need to ask the way to the Educated Sea-Lions; you just followed Hookey's voice, and there you were, opposite the pay-tent or the box-office. To tell the truth, his voice was just a tone or so too penetrating at times, and got him into trouble once, but that was before he actively joined the troupe.

Hookey began life in a Scandinavian zoo. One day he appeared from nowhere, in the outdoor sea-lion tank, and, seated complacently by his jealous parent, faced a battery of press cameras without so much as the tremble of a solitary whisker. For six months he filled the gardens with visitors, and then, together with other creatures, disappeared—a much-lamented item in the great "zoo robbery" that exercised Norwegian newspapers, not to mention the police, for many a long day afterwards. But Hookey was never seen again—at least, in northern latitudes. A young sea-lion was exhibited—on a barrow—in the seaport towns along the Mediterranean coast by a man who incurred no more than a very fleeting suspicion, speedily and glibly allayed. For this was in the florid pre-War days, and not as now, when you can rent a damp-proof house with greater ease than come by a living Californian sea-lion.

Hookey's life was, like the Savoy policeman's, "not a happy one." His exhibitor treated Hookey worse than an Armenian treats his horse. He did not beat Hookey, because Hookey's skin was of the sort that is soon rendered unfit for exhibition by blows, but he underfed the growing beast as only a pinchbeck itinerant showman can underfeed his charges, and Hookey faced crowded houses in the blistering summer sun on an empty stomach. He cried aloud upon a world convinced that it was just "the manner of the beast."

Matters came to a head one morning on the outskirts of a fish-market. Straining at his greasy leathern collar and leash of rotten rope, Hookey glared round upon the gleaming merchandise, and was wrung from gaping mouth to restless hind flippers with all the agonies of Tantalus. There were slabs piled high with rose-red sun-bream, marbled murænas, and silvery mullet, buckets of urchin, squilla, fiddler crab, and spiny rock-lobster, stacks of clam and scallops, and shapeless mounds of cuttlefish. There was enough food for all the seals upon Saint Paul's rocks in the far Pacific, that sea-lion paradise which the unhappy Hookey had never known. A fishwife, joining the crowd that jostled round the little sea-lion, flung him a tiny cuttlefish. Hookey took it at a gulp, a gulp that jerked his round throat just that fraction necessary to give him sudden freedom. It broke the rope.

Amid screams and yells of laughter, and the rattle of a hundred sabots on the cobblestones, Hookey clove a pathway through the crowd, and made for the nearest stall, just as his owner appeared from a neighbouring bar.

With characteristic Southern warmth, showman and salesman engaged in a noisy argument, oblivious of all save their own eloquence, oblivious even of Hookey. He pouched some fifteen mackerel ere the salesman had got well into his stride. By the time his owner was running over the less savoury details of the salesman's past career, Hookey had negotiated a ten-pound cod in three bites and as many gulps, and was reaching after a pile of mullet on a wobbly trestle. The trestle collapsed, and the mullet came about his ears in a shining cascade. Like lightning, Hookey singled out the biggest, caught it broadside-on upon his shiny nose-tip, neatly butted it into the air, and received it, as it came down, head first, into the red tunnel from which no fish returns. The action, slight as it was, caught the eye of a sunburned man who, together with the police, had joined the gathering crowd.

The advent of this newcomer was a fortunate event for Hookey. It not only prevented him choking himself with the spiney gurnets his infant appetite had next prompted him to tackle, but it marked the turning-point in his career. There was a scene of the knockabout variety in the market-place, another at the police station, and three days later the last act was played out at the local assizes. The upshot of it all was that Hookey became the property of the sunburnt Englishman, Hookey's old master receiving, in exchange, enough money to ensure his drinking himself to death comfortably in something under three months.

But for Hookey a new world had dawned. The sea-lion, as we have already mentioned, is a creature quick to show the signs of ill-usage or of kind treatment. For three months he shared a huge iron tank with two other sea-lions older than himself, and every day the sunburnt man spent many hours with them, feeding them, talking to them, accustoming them to his voice and hand, and to every detail of his presence. He played curious games with them, in which he coaxed them into keeping still, first for only two or three seconds, later for a minute or more at a time, and as often as they obeyed him, they received more and yet more fish. The world holds only one thing for the captive sea-lion—fish. Every time Hookey showed that he recognised his master he received a fish. Every time he gave satisfaction in their curious daily games he received a fish, a fish for every

point in the game. He grew to live in the hourly—nay, momentary—hope of receiving another fish, and he was seldom disappointed. Hookey was quick to learn—it paid him. He must have received hundreds of pounds of fishy bribes—in addition to his ration of twenty-five pounds a day—ere he delighted his master by balancing a rubber ball upon his nose for nearly as long as it takes to dot an "i." On that auspicious day he and his mates were taken in a cart down to the dock and given a two hours' watery romp, to the entertainment of a crowd of labourers and idlers.

So passed Hookey's first summer. With never a blow or a harsh word to estrange him from his master, he came to hang upon that godling's every word and gesture, regarded him, in fact, as an inexhaustible fount of all that goes to make the sea-lion Eldorado—fish!

It was not until some two years later that Hookey actually made his bow—as corner man in the Educated Sea-Lion Troupe—to a sensation-loving public. During those first two years he had had many strange experiences. He travelled with the troupe—his master, mate, and seven sea-lions—all over Europe, but never faced the footlights. Sometimes he was farmed out at some local zoo, where he learnt to keep a watchful eye for photographers and others prone to bribe his keeper, into coaxing him to show off, with an extra dole of hake. One glorious night he sampled tit-bits from the fish of half the world. That was in the days when Hookey, "on deposit" at a big aquarium, forced open a door, left unlocked by a careless watchman, and gained access to the row of planks that ran above the great tanks full of finny aristocrats of all waters—from giant conger and royal sturgeon to rainbow trout and Japanese double-tailed gold fish. Hookey visited every tank in turn. He started by pouching seven-and-thirty live herring. Then he fought with a young walrus and gave balm to his wounds by biting shoulder pieces out of six royal sturgeon, and then fell upon a tank brimming with young salmon. When, too gorged to swallow more, he found his limit at somewhere near sixty pounds weight of fish, he slew or maimed for the fierce joy of the thing. He was found, in the morning, inflated but happy, five doors from his own tank. The orgy of the night had been too much for Hookey. He slept where he fell; that final piece of salmon had proved the last



"He pouched some fifteen mackerel."

held out, maintained a decent silence for the first six bars, and then voice, band, and organ faded to a distant hum before that awful voice from out the sea-lions' tank: "Hook, hook, hook, hook, hook!"

Hookey was next heard of at a provincial zoo.

There has been a wealth of discussion recently, both in Parliament and without, as to the desirability of animal performances. Hookey's views upon the subject might have been worth having, though we fancy he was too preoccupied to give much thought to the matter. A swim and a meal was all he lived for. Having had a dip or a meal, he settled down to look forward to the next, and as he was usually swimming when not acting, and always eating when on the stage, we may assume that he was tolerably happy. He knew that every time he hurled the balls of fire into the air, played the trombone, or kissed his keeper, he was certain of a plump, fresh whiting, and, as soon as the salvos of applause crowned his last effort, was free to shuffle off into the wings and climb into the little wheeled cage that would take

straw, so to speak, for even Hookey's short but sturdy limbs to carry.

However, Hookey's last appearance at the aquarium was due to quite another sort of misadventure. It was in England, and though it happened many years ago, the affair still rankles in the memory of a certain popular contralto. The aquarium was also a concert hall, and Miss Blank, in response to the thunderous demand for an encore, was announced to sing "The Lost Chord." Few of us can hear it finely rendered without emotion. Neither could Hookey. He

him to the tank, pond, or even swimming bath, where he was free to gambol till the next evening. Sometimes he and his colleagues gave a water act, when his master, in the uniform of a naval officer, rapped out "Double Somersault!" "Swallow Dive!" and Hookey flung himself unerringly into a huge glass tank, to the plentiful besprinkling of the orchestra.

At five years of age Hookey looked like a masterpiece of sculpture cast in bronze, and was worth at least half his weight in bank-notes. He could out-juggle most of his human competitors on the variety stage, and had flapped his way along the "boards" in half the cities of the world. His master cherished a volume of press cuttings immortalising Hookey, and every year this darling of the "halls" enjoyed a three or even six months' holiday. It is impossible to "work" a sea-lion all the year round.

And all this time Hookey had only once had any very definite desire to hark back to the sea that was his natural home. Even when roaming the Channel as a submarine finder during the War, he had been easily lured back to the Admiralty launch and the placid routine of captivity. Then one wild autumn, when showing at a South Coast syndicate hall, the vague stirrings that every sea-lion must know some time in his life came back upon him, as they had never come before. It took an extra pail of fish to cajole Hookey through his turn that night. Back to his tank, overlooked by staring properties and in an atmosphere of dirt, dust, paint and fish, Hookey ranged backwards and forwards and raised his raucous voice to a pitch that threatened the best efforts of the band. Something inside Hookey would not let him rest.

It cried aloud above the hunger that never leaves a healthy sea-lion, cried aloud and mingled with another wild voice far beyond the grimy yard door with its "No Smoking" notice. It was a voice that moaned around the garish music-hall, and tore at Hookey's heart-strings till it seemed they must burst. Now, indeed, did he know the anguish of captivity. Backwards and forwards he tore, now shoulder high out of the water, now skimming the bottom of the tank in a frenzied swirl of bubbles.

"Drat them hanimals!" growled the night watchman. Hookey's master had left the building, his "Good night" to his charges meeting with no response from his favourite for the first time in five years. He left puzzled and disappointed, and the

night watchman, unable to read his evening paper, by reason of that ear-splitting bark, cursed the "turn," its owner, and the syndicate with vigour and imagination.

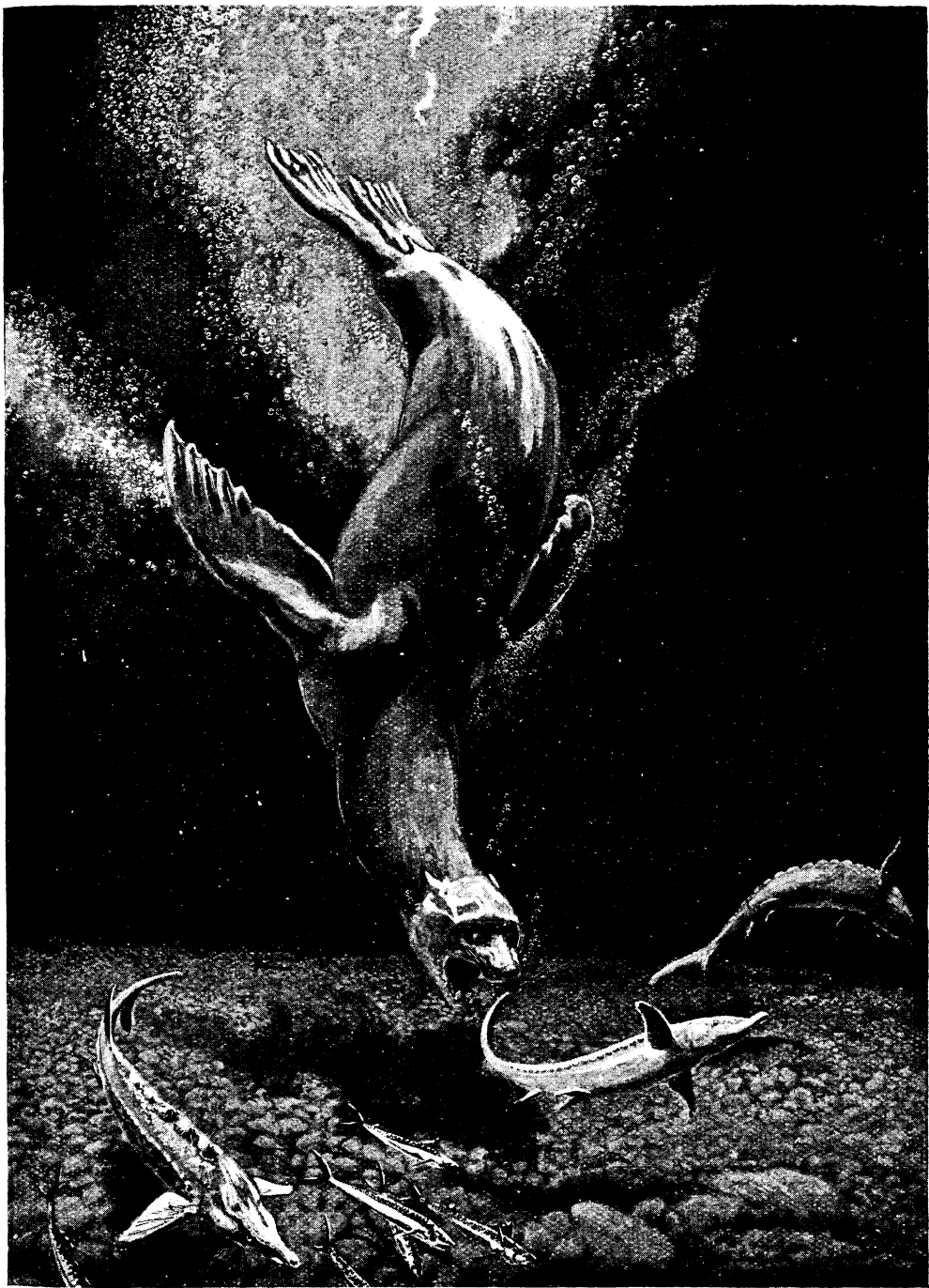
"Drat them hanimals! Don't yer *never* go to bed? Blowed if I don't step outside a bit before me ears is busted!"

He passed, cursing, to the door and opened it. With the first gust of wind and rain, that voice without swept in and hailed the sea-lions in their tank with a vigour there was no denying. The tang of salt in the cold night air, the distant thunder far away beyond the shoddy little town—Hookey knew it, the voice of his lover, the voice of the sea.

A sea-lion's climbing capacity is, under ordinary circumstances, limited, very limited. An exceptionally large sea-lion, however, can, under exceptional stimulus, overcome his ordinary incapacity and achieve the seemingly impossible.

The voice of the storm, and anxiety to espy someone who might, perchance, be sent to the coffee stall for hard-boiled eggs and a mug of tea, deadened the watchman's ears to the hubbub in the tank upon the far side of the property room. A huge, shining shape was rearing itself upon the edge of the tank. Higher and higher it rose, a vast glistening bulk, pyramidal in form and lit at the summit by a pair of burning eyes, and gaping crimson mouth set with teeth worthy of a tiger. The shape rose from the tank with the water pouring from it in a thousand rivulets, then it lurched forward and fell with a squashy sound such as might have been produced from a sodden bundle of washing fallen from a roof.

But the shape upon the floor was far from dead. It raised itself on four stumpy legs, splayed out at their base into enormous flippers, and on these it came bounding, at a sort of unearthly gallop, across the floor, between the legs of the watchman, and so out into the night. A duck, a newt, or a water-beetle, however far they be taken from their native element, will, on being set down, head towards it once again without a moment's hesitation. So is it with a sea-lion, so was it now with Hookey. He had never been in Brascombe before, but he knew the way to the promenade. He made for it now, flip, flap, flop, a very nightmare in the murky gaslight, and horribly discomfiting a party of belated revellers. Few barred his path. A cat, fish in mouth, made for a doorway, leaving



"When too gorged to swallow more . . . he slew or maimed for the fierce joy of the thing."

the fish behind. At the corner of Station Road the Law made shift to head Hookey back by the way he had come, but decided to get help instead. A sea-lion can look very wicked on occasion.

As Hookey rounded the clock tower he

dashed into a pair of roisterers and left them wet, scared, but soberer men. We are a phlegmatic race, and can view camels or elephants in our streets calmly enough. Films frequently account for these. But a dark street insufficiently lit can give quite

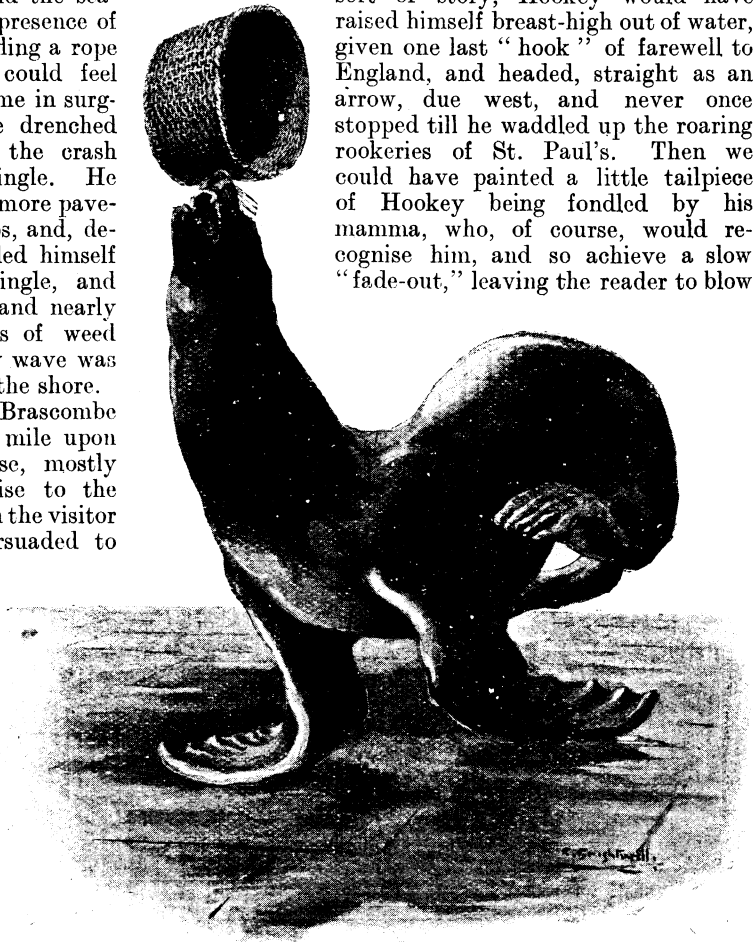
a fiendish aspect to the sea-lion. It was thanks to this, no doubt, that Hookey enjoyed such an unhampered progress to his heart's desire. A bull-dog, the terror of Brascombe, raced its master to a place of safety as Hookey came lurching past Ham and Egg Terrace, that gives upon the Brascombe promenade. The horse that took fright a moment later and smashed its gig to pieces on the bandstand left Hookey unmoved. So, too, did the seaman who, with some presence of mind, made shift to fling a rope over him. Hookey could feel the spray now as it came in surging clouds across the drenched pavement, and hear the crash and rattle of the shingle. He traversed some grass, more pavement, a flight of steps, and, delirious with joy, hurled himself down the boiling shingle, and was flung backwards and nearly choked by mountains of weed and refuse that every wave was furiously piling upon the shore.

Each autumn sees Brascombe beach buried beneath mile upon mile of rotten refuse, mostly weed, which gives rise to the fearsome odours which the visitor is with difficulty persuaded to regard as the much-vaunted ozone. The Brascombe Urban District Council are going to do something about it—one day. To-night the stuff, gathering for weeks past for a hundred miles around, was coming ashore upon the fierce wings of the equinoctial gale. The ground-swell tore it, tons at a time, with both hands from the ravaged sea-bed—and then, boom, rattle, crash! dumped it on the Brascombe foreshore, piled it on the Brascombe esplanade, and even flung the fulsome fragments through the windows of Brascombe's most select hotels and boarding establishments.

You can generally launch a lifeboat. But it is impossible to launch a lifeboat. But there are exceptions. To-night was one of

them. It broke Hookey's heart and brings this story swiftly to its close.

If only this was a proper animal story, of the proper romantic pattern, what a charming ending it might have! We should describe how Hookey coursed up and down the Channel some score of times, to the admiration of saloon passengers on P. and O.s, and the superstitious awe of romantic fishermen. Then, in the proper sort of story, Hookey would have raised himself breast-high out of water, given one last "hook" of farewell to England, and headed, straight as an arrow, due west, and never once stopped till he waddled up the roaring rookeries of St. Paul's. Then we could have painted a little tailpiece of Hookey being fondled by his mamma, who, of course, would recognise him, and so achieve a slow "fade-out," leaving the reader to blow



"On top of his nose the fish basket."

his nose or dab her eyes, as the case might be.

But this is the sordid story of a world-stained beast who never knew the "wild" beloved of story-tellers, who was cheated of his birthright, and doomed to live out a life as artificial as that of any man or woman who nightly applauded his unnatural antics. And so our last word of him must

be upon the note with which this sordid little history began.

The end of three hours saw Hookey, faint with hunger, weary with battling in the rubbish-laden breakers, and bleeding from a score of cuts, heading up town, in full retreat, flying from the sea. He did not in the least know where he was going, or where he wanted to go, but he did know one thing—he wanted fish badly and at once. He found it with surprising suddenness. A yellow blot of gas-light showed in the cold grey of that sad autumn morning. The "boy" of the Sea Fish Company—Brascombe Branch—was opening shop. Hookey mistrusted the youth, his red hair, and his broom, but he liked the smell. This was the right sort of smell. Presently all would be well with him. The youth, unconscious of the approaching ebony figure without, retired to the back of the shop and fell into animated conversation with a maiden on her knees, scrubbing the floor. Hookey entered. The smell was still quite right—stronger, in fact—but where was the fish? Hookey would wait: the fish always came if you waited long enough. He backed into a cupboard, and then, just as a gentle reminder: "H-oo-ook!"

Screams, and scrambling feet, and then a well-aimed fish basket, hurled by the red-haired boy, smote Hookey on the tip of his nose . . . and stayed there! Hookey had never—since he left his first master—been hit, kicked, or assailed with missiles of any sort. A thing flung at him was to be caught and held; it was part of the day's work, and the natural prelude to a full meal. Hookey's supple neck shot forth like the neck of a

striking snake. Then his head sank backwards into its collar of fat, and his never-failing sense—the result of long and arduous study—of an object's centre of gravity did the rest. All this transpired in under three seconds.

Hookey stayed there, front flippers widely spread, head well back, nose pointing ceilingwards, and on top of his nose the fish basket. The fish was a long time coming, but undoubtedly this boy would give him some. Presently the boy's eyes would cease to roll round and round in his head, the band would strike up "Caller Herring," the basket would be whipped off Hookey's nose, and then would come reward.

What? The boy was standing by the door with a fish in his hand? Very good. This was quite in the programme. Hookey had followed a clown three times round a circus ring for a fish not half the size of the one now dangling before him.

As the boy walked backwards, Hookey advanced, and in this fashion, with an ever-growing procession in his rear, did Hookey make his weary but glorious progress to the local police station. The basket was heavy, and reopened a nasty cut Hookey had received on his nose some hours earlier, but he waddled bravely forwards, both eyes glued upon the lodestone fish in front of him.

It was Hookey's great tragedy in life—his first and last bid for the freedom that should have been his by right.

Yet how are we all only too apt to be misunderstood! "Really," said an old woman, hobbling by upon her way to work, "what won't these music-hall people be doin' next for an advertisement?"





TO MEMORY

By MICHAEL WILSON.

YOUR pensive hands, O Memory, keep
Dry leaves, dead petals, fragrant yet.
Your head is bowed; you do not weep,
Although the down-drooped lids are wet.
You smile, and to your brow there clings
The shadow of immortal things.



Too dear, too dear, I turn away
And leave you to your silent store,
Embrace the chances of to-day,
And at the morrow's darkened door
I knock and, unreluctant, wait
As in the ambush of my fate.



This thought, O Memory, most of all
Befriends me, that a day draws near
When the last hope shall fade and fall,
And blindly I shall feel and hear
Your voice and hands, and there renew
The savour of lost things with you.



“A second later he had slipped through.”

THE HOLD-UP AT McFARLAND'S

By OTTWELL BINNS

Author of "A Hazard of the Snows," "The Treasure of Christophe," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY DUDLEY TENNANT

NOPE! Circle ain't what it was!" The old-timer spat in the stove as he made this commonplace remark, and the grey-bearded, rather frowsy prospector on the other side of the stove looked up from the mukluk he was repairing and offered both corroboration and prophecy.

"That's a cold fact. And it won't never be ag'in, for the dust has petered out."

I looked through the glazed window on the little row of cabins, the road-house, and the store—the forlorn remains of Circle City—and remembered that once it had boasted of itself as the biggest log-cabin town in the world. Then it had a population of three thousand men eager for the hard-won gold of the North; now its resident white population was twenty-five. Recalling these things, I agreed. There was nothing else to be done.

"Ichabod is written on its walls."

"I ain't seen it," said the old-timer, "but if yer mean it's busted, ye're right on it." He paused and then added thoughtfully: "When a man corpses, his mates bury him, if he has luck, an' somebody ought to have buried Circle when Carmack made the Klondike strike."

The grizzled prospector laughed as he heaved a couple of logs in the stove. "What are yo' growling at, Jake? Ain't we cremating it jest as fast as the stove can take it? And blame useful its bones are!"

I suppose I must have looked a little curious, for the prospector laughed again as he offered explanation.

"Them chunks are part of the Tivoli dance hall, an' the wood-pile outside is what is left of it, which ain't much. It's

fair wonderful what a lot o' wood a stove'll eat up in a winter, an' the logs are prime an' dry." He laughed once more. "I guess that by the time the ice breaks we'll about finish the funeral of the old Tivoli."

He tossed the mukluk into a corner, then he asked suddenly: "Remember the guy who drifted along here two winters back, Jake?"

"In course I do. Wasn't I at ther Tivoli when they stripped him to his shirt, an' Single O Clara stuck up ther company an' got away with ther boy an' ther dust together?"

"Single O Clara?" I asked, for the name had a tang of the old days, and I was curious to know the story behind it.

"Yep! But that ain't her name to-day. Like to hear the story? Then pass the plug, an' when I'm through I'll show you her picture."

I passed the plug, and this is the story that I heard of the old roaring days when Circle was in all men's mouths, and the Mecca of every adventurer of the five continents or the seven seas.

"'Twas on a bitter night in the winter of '96, when into the Tivoli there walked a kid who had Britisher writ all over him. If nothin' else had a-given him away, his balloon breeches an' Norfolk jacket would ha' done it with a shout; an' add to them his curly yellow hair, an' face innocent than a year-old babe, an' a pair o' blue eyes that were as limpid as the dew, an' you have his outfit to the last stitch.

"As pretty a boy as ever gladdened the eyes of a girl an' made her want him to look at her; an' I guess that's how it was with Single O Clara when he stepped into the Tivoli that night, an', kicking the snow from his moccasins, walked up to the bar and called for a drink."

"Single O Clara wasn't in ther bar," objected the old-timer raucously.

"Of course she wasn't. Think I don't know that, you chump? Clara wasn't that style. She was one of the star performers, and about as white an' glistenin' as a lily. But though she wasn't in the bar, she was in the saloon when that golden boy came in, an' I saw her eyes light up like stars shinin' suddenly in the sky."

"Her eyes could shine some," commented the old-timer, "though they was black as night itself."

"Yes, an' as steady as the gun in her hand when she was doin' her shootin'

performance at the range at the back of the Tivoli bar."

"Was that her line?" I asked.

"One of them. Th' other was that she could sing like a bird, an' make you think of home, sweet home, with the cows coming up from the pastures and the apple blossom on the trees. I've seen a couple of hundred sourdoughs sniffing like a lot o' kids when she was singing one of them little songs of hers which tugged your heart sinews stronger nor a steam-winch could have done."

"She could carol a bit," agreed the old-timer enthusiastically. "An' what she was doing up here I never knew."

"McFarland, who ran the Tivoli, told me that," said the prospector. "She came in with an opera company, half of which went through the ice below Kandik, an' t'other half of which went gold-digging or, on the female side, wine-rushing in the saloons. But Clara didn't belong there, an' McFarland's daughter, picking her up on the trail, brought her along; an' though Mac was as tough a man as ever sold rye whisky, he had to do what his daughter bade him, an' he took her in an' used her in the legitimate drama, so to speak. An' Clara was a treasure, what with her voice an' her shootin', not to mention her high-stepping beauty."

"Her shooting——" I began, only to be interrupted.

"Yep! She was a wonder with a little gun. There never was her like, man or woman, in all the North. She would borrow all the guns in the place, and shoot steady a hundred times an' make a bull through the century."

"But she always missed ther hundred-an'-first."

"Yep! That was the queer thing in the performance. The girl was never known to make a hit on the first shot after the century—till that night. Regularly new-comers used to bet on the shot, an' lose to them who'd seen the performance before, though there were sourdoughs who would have a sporting bet at times; an' when she'd scored the hundred, I've seen a whole bunch of men waiting breathless for the next shot, thinking that some day she was bound to make the unbroken score, but she never did till——"

"After ther miss she could go on till it got fair monotonous," commented the old-timer. "'Twas a quare trick, that hundred-an'-first miss."

"The boys used to encourage her all they could to do it. I've seen a sack o' gold dust that must have been worth all a thousand dollars that was hers if she scored the bull; but she didn't win it. Clara used to laugh an' say that she expected to miss that shot, an' couldn't get away from the expectation which accounted for the miss. It became a habit with her, as you might say. It was all part of her performance, an' after it she'd get on the stage, sit at McFarland's grand piano, an' sing to tear your heart out."

"Might have sung herself inter millions," broke in his friend. "There was half a score of big-claimers would have married her if she'd have had them."

"But she just laughed at 'em all till the right one came along, an' that was the golden-haired English boy who drifted in out of the snow half an hour or more before her performance was due to begin. He didn't see her when first he entered, an' he'd lifted the glass to his lips and half turned to look round, when his eyes fell on the girl. I was watching him, and I saw the look of wonder come on his baby face; then slowly he set down the glass on the edge of the bar, and took a step forward as if he was going to speak to her. Then he stopped short as if he had remembered something, an' looked about him——"

"For somebody ter introjuce him, I suppose," laughed the old-timer.

"You've got it. He was that sort. None of your chuck-her-under-the-chin style about him. He'd been brought up tony an' proper, and he wouldn't presume to speak to a lady like the toughs at Circle did in them days. You see, he respected the sex, which every man don't."

"He was right about Clara, anyway," commented his chum.

"Yes. And I guess that the girl saw how it was with him at that moment, for I saw her face soften and the light in her eyes kindle again; an' she herself looked round and then back to the golden boy standing at the bar, with his rye whisky clean forgotten. They hadn't spoken a word, but they stood there like a pair of love-birds lookin' at each other; an' Heaven knows what would have happened if Kitty McFarland hadn't come along just then and, slipping her arm through Clara's, taken her away."

"The boy watched her till she'd gone, a look in his eyes that told how it was with him, and at the swing-door Single O Clara turned and looked round once, an' I reckon

saw him standing there, and knew, as a girl does, all an' more than he could have told her about his feelings. But when she'd gone, he sorter got his breath, drank up the whisky, asked the bar-tender a question, an' then walked towards the table, where a crowd of McFarland's wolves were waiting for just such a babe as he was. One of them said something to the boy, who laughed and sat down at the table, paid for a handful of chips, an' began a game he'll never forget until they stamp the sods down on his coffin in some green English churchyard."

He broke off, picked up a small stick, and thrust it into the glowing stove. When it was well alight, he applied it to his pipe, puffed steadily for a few seconds, and then resumed.

II.

"You didn't know McFarland's and the bunch of toughs he kept to help him run the Tivoli, or there'd be no need to tell you how that golden, blue-eyed boy was skinned."

"He'd a pelt worth taking," interrupted the old-timer.

"Yep! The boy had made a bit of a strike of his own. He'd owned a claim on Birch Creek that promised well, and had just sold out to one of the American companies for ninety thousand dollars. He carried the draft in his pocket-book, ready for cashing at Seattle on his way out, for, as we learned afterwards, he was going south for open water the very next day."

"The game the boy sat down to was draw-poker, and McFarland's scoundrels 'cold-decked' him till even that golden-haired babe must have guessed what was happening to him. Others knew it if he didn't, but nobody interfered, for he was a Britisher, an' his clan wasn't so mighty popular at Circle just then."

"After a bit he'd lost twenty thousand dollars, and one of the tin-horns suggested that maybe he'd like to stand down. He said it in a pitying sort of way that would have put up the back fur of a dead rabbit, and it stung the boy just as it was meant to do."

"Stand down yourself, if you're nervous," he said in his drawling voice. 'We'll take the limit off the game.'

"'Twas a good spirit the golden boy showed, and I liked him for it, and I'd have passed him the word if I could; but there was no chance. One of the men who sat in with him was Moosehide Charley, the

quickest man with a gun on all the Yukon, and to have butted in with the truth would have been a most unhealthy act, so there was

off. Somebody called for drinks, and then they went at it like two o'clock. I watched the boy's face. There was a hot flush in his cheeks and a dancing light in his eyes that told that cards was in his blood, and though, with only now and again a flutter of luck, he lost steadily, he played on.

"It was a slack night at the Tivoli, with no more than



"What's ther game, Clara?"

nothing for it but to watch those blackguards skin the fur off the boy.

"They did it in style once the limit was

twenty men there, and most of them gave up what they were doing to watch, whilst right in the middle of the game

back came Single O Clara and stood watching the players. That she tumbled to the situation at once I could see. Her face

I could see trouble brewin' in them for Mooshide Charley, an' I began to speculate as to the form it would take."



"'It's the return game on Mooshide,' said the girl, 'only played honestest than he did! Keep 'em up!'" she said sharply, as some guy made a move."

showed that, and what happened at the end proved it. But, like the rest of us, she never cut in, but watched the boy lose an' lose his chips, counted at five hundred dollars apiece; and, looking at her eyes,

"I saw it, too," chimed in the old-timer. "Her face was like a tragedy actress, an' there was forked lightnin' in them wonderful eyes of hers. An' once, too, I see her hand go to ther pistol in her belt, an' wondered ef

she meant to draw on Charley. But her hand fell away agin, an' she stood there watchin', an', but for her eyes, white an' still as a marble statoo. 'Twas better than a play to see, for thet big trouble was brewing was a thing to bet on. But et didn't come jest in the way or at the time I'd looked for et."

"No," corroborated the prospector. "That was the queer thing about it, an' showed that the girl had put in some thinking whilst she watched, for when golden-hair sort o' staggered to his feet and said shakingly, 'Boys, I'm through!' she never moved.

"'Hev a drink,' said Moosehide, with a noisy laugh. 'There's nothin' like whisky for drownin' trouble.'

"'Trouble!' raps the boy, with a crisp note in it that made me jump. 'Who is talking of trouble?'

"'Not me,' answered Moosehide Charley, with a glint of surprise in the eye with which he watched the boy whilst he folded up the draft note which he'd as good as stole.

"'Because, if anybody is seeking it, they can have it for nothing,' said the lad in a way that told that he'd have welcomed it.

"There was a bleak look on the face of him, and 'twas easy to see that he was badly hit, though he tried not to show it. Then, as Charley sat mum, he turned as if to go out of the saloon, an' I'd have laid level dollars that he meant to shoot himself. 'Twas then that Clara interfered. She put a hand on his arm.

"'You can't go yet,' she said. 'You've never seen me shoot.'

"'Shoot?' said the boy, staring at her queerly, for he knew nothing of her performance.

"'Yes,' she said, 'and I want your pistol.'

"The girl didn't wait for a 'Yes' or 'No.' She just helped herself before he could protest, an' then called merrily: 'Boys, your guns. I've a hunch that I'll hit the hundred-and-first to-night.'

"'Bet you twenty dollars you don't, Clara!' shouted someone.

"'Done!' she said. And whilst the boys, who were used to the game, put their guns on the table, she talked on first to this miner and then to that, and then, when she thought no one could hear, I heard her whisper to the golden-haired laddie—

"'Got a dog-team?'

"'Sure!' he throws back. 'The best on the river.'

"'Then harness up, stack provisions and dog food, and wait for me at the waterhole.'

"'What are you going to do?' he asked, with a queer look in his eyes.

"I didn't get the answer, but I caught her laugh, an' it had an edge like a skinning-knife, and I guessed that there was more going to happen than the little crowd in the saloon was anticipating. The boy stared at her, glared once at Moosehide Charley, and then went out, whilst Clara began to collect the guns she had asked for, putting them on the table in front of her. She counted them carefully, then suddenly she turned to the tin-horn Charley.

"'Your little gun, Charley? I want 'em all to-night.'

"Charley passed up the gun, reluctant-like, I thought, and I've wondered since if he'd any sort of hunch as to what was coming. If he had, he was the only one in the room, for it never entered into my head what the girl was up to, spite of what I'd heard pass between her and the golden boy.

"When she got Charley's gun, she shoved the table where she wanted it, an' began to shoot, emptying each one o' them guns at a rate that would have made some folk stare, and every bullet found its mark in the bull as regular as a clock ticking off the seconds.

"I didn't particularly watch the shooting, but I watched Clara. There was something about the girl that night that I couldn't fathom, a sort of tense look, like a wire drawn taut that you're expecting will bust. Others noticed it, too, for I saw a man here and there staring at her sort of puzzled-like, and it wasn't until the marker announced the century that I grew interested in the shooting. Then a frozen silence fell on the saloon. You could hear the clock ticking as loud as the last trump, and with it the sound of snow on the windows. Clara looked at the target and lifted the gun for the hundred-and-first, and just as she was sighting, Moosehide Charley broke in—

"'I'll lay you twenty ounces to one you don't do it, Clara.'

"The girl looked at him once and laughed, and the edge on the laughter was keener than before. Then she spoke contemptuously: 'No, Moosehide: I play fair, which you do not!'

"Moosehide jumped to his feet at that, a black oath on his lips: but the girl looked at the target, and somebody shouted: 'Sit down, Charley! Do yer want ter spoil her aim?'

"Charley dropped back, and then the girl threw her arm forward as careless as could be, sighted like lightning, and pulled the trigger. A roar went up as men saw she'd made the hundred-an'-first. They shouted according to their natures—some one thing, some another—an' right in the midst of the racket I saw the golden-haired boy come in at the door. He stood staring, and maybe the girl saw his likeness in the mirror near by her, for that he was there she knew, as she showed in a minute or so. Anyway, she never looked round, I'll swear; but whilst the boys were still shouting, she picked up the two charged pistols that were left, looked at them, and jerked them forward one in either hand, and as the crowd fell quiet, said pleasantly:

"Hands up, boys!"

"Somebody began to laugh, but choked suddenly as she stamped her little foot.

"Quick, or——"

"Her eyes were like forked lightnings, there was a look on her face that was as solemn as Judgment Day, an' the edge on her voice would have cut through a grizzly's hide. The boys wasn't sure whether it was earnest or play; but I knew it was earnest, and I put 'em up instanter. The crowd followed the good example, and then Clara looked round an', with an odd little laugh, said: 'Most of them want washing, but Moosehide's are the dirtiest!' There was a laugh at that, then someone asked curiously:

"What's ther game, Clara?"

"It's the return game on Moosehide," said the girl, 'only played honestest than he did! Keep 'em up!' she said sharply, as some guy made a move. 'This is a real hold-up, and it is best not to get monkeying with the road-agent! You boys can keep your dust, but Moosehide Charley will hand out that draft on Seattle which he stole from the English boy just now!'

"I'll see you crucified first!" shouted Moosehide explosively.

"Single O Clara stamped her foot again. 'Lively!' she said, in a voice that was dead quiet. 'I shall count three, and then——'

"She began to count.

"One!"

"I saw Moosehide look at the artillery on the table in front of her, and then at the two guns that held the crowd, and knew that he realised how corkingly prime was the situation from the girl's point of view.

Then he spoke snarlingly. 'You'll pay for this crooked——'

"Crooked!" broke in Clara. 'It's as straight as the sword of justice against the corkscrew game that you used to skin the boy out of his money!'

"That was the only defence she made of the thing she was doing, and the boys knew that she was dead right; and as it wasn't their funeral, most of 'em was willing to let things take their course, an' sat there interested in the drama, as you might say.

"Moosehide looked savage, but the girl wasn't anyway put out at it.

"Two!" she said in a voice that in the dead stillness was like the stroke of a bell.

"The boys waited, wondering if she would shoot, and you could feel the thrill that was in the saloon. Every man-jack was so interested in the play that nobody thought of interfering, even if Clara had given the chance, which she didn't, for her eyes played like lightning everywhere. Then one of the miners, tired of keeping his hands up, asks playfully: 'Say, Clara, girl, couldn't we put 'em palms down on the table? 'Twould be more restful-like.'

"No!" she said, quick as a gun. 'If Moosehide doesn't make up his mind in a second——'

"Can I reach for it?' asked Moosehide, with a snarl.

"Yes, but no tricks.'

"I caught a gleam in the scoundrel's eyes that told me he was going to play dirty, and I got ready for dropping under the table, which is the safest place when shooting begins inside four walls; and the next second Moosehide had dragged out, not his pocket-book, but a little derringer, which he snapped off as he threw it forward.

"He ought to have known better. The girl was quicker than he was. Maybe she'd read treachery in his eyes as I had—anyway, she fired a half second before him, and Moosehide, with a smashed hand, dropped the derringer, which rolled from the table to the floor.

"Chums," said Clara simply, 'I couldn't help it! He played crooked.' Then, without turning her head, she called to golden hair: 'Pick up that toy gun, boy!'

"The boy came forward and, picking up the gun, shoved it in his pocket; then, on her instructions, he took out Moosehide's pocket-book and from that his own draft note on Seattle, and stood with it in his hand.

" 'I don't know that this is fair, Miss——' he began.

"But Clara cut in: 'You were cold-decked from start to finish. Every man in the room knows it, Moosehide Charley better than anyone. Put it in your pocket, boy, and don't look a gift-horse in the mouth.'

"The golden boy had the sense to do what he was told, and then Clara spoke again.

" 'I'm glad I made the hundred-and-one to-night, boys. It's a sort of swan-song. I'll never do it again at the Tivoli, for I guess I'll have to quit right now. But I wish you all good luck, mountains of pay-dirt, and bright colours in the pan.'

"She backed towards the door, and the boy, with the derringer back in his hand, kept step with her. Not a man of us moved, but I could hear Charley groaning curses to himself. When they got to the swing-door, the boy insisted on her going through first, then he waved a hand.

" 'I'm sorry, boys, but I'm bound to stand by a lady!'

"A second later he had slipped through, and as the door swung to, Moosehide started to his feet, a roaring maniac.

" 'After them, boys! They'll hang for this. Get 'em before they quit, an' I'll divide that draft among——'

" 'Oh, shut up!' said a miner who'd no love for the tin-horn. 'You got what's been coming to you a long while, and Clara deserves to get away with it.'

"Moosehide raged, but not a man moved except the two sharpers who'd been in the skin game with him, and when they got to the door they found it fast on the other side, the girl or the boy having slipped a miner's crowbar through the handles, and the only way out was over the bar-counter and round the back. The boys laughed as they went, and none of them having been hurt, and all the honest ones, rejoicing at what had happened to Charley, made bets as to whether they'd catch Clara and the boy."

"Did they?" I asked, impatient for the end of the story.

The prospector shook his head. "Nope! 'Twas snowing hard, an' they made a clean get-away, though for three or four months, till the news came through that the draft had been cashed at Seattle, nobody was sure whether they'd made the outside or not; and there was standing wagers that sooner or later they'd be found frozen somewhere on the trail, for it was a bad winter."

"But they've been up here since?" I said, remembering the beginning of the story.

"The boy has, and a big fine man he is. Two years back now he drifted into the store one winter's day, an' I knew him instantly. He was with two other Britishers and a couple of Indians who were working north after musk-ox and what-not; and I followed him outside, and when I got a chance I asked him plump and plain: 'Where's Single O Clara?'

"He fair jumped at that, then he laughed. 'You know me?'

" 'Yep!' said I, and waited for him to answer.

" 'Where's your shack?' he asked, laughing again. 'It's too cold to stand yarning in the snow.'"

"I brought him here, an' over the whisky I asked him again: 'Where's Clara?'

" 'At home,' he laughed, 'minding the kiddies and nursing the constituency.'

" 'Ah, you married the girl?' I fair shouted.

" 'What else? Two days after quitting Circle we ran into the camp of a Jesuit priest up the river, an' he tied the knot there's no undoing. We had the jolliest honeymoon running down to Dyea. But where's Moosehide Charley?'

" 'In hell these eighteen years. He was lynched by a miners' meeting the summer after you quit.'

" 'Clara'll be glad to know that,' he said.

" 'A lot of people was glad to know it when it happened,' I remarked.

"He shoved the whisky over again, then he laughed and asked: 'Would you like to see a picture of Clara and the kiddies?'

"I said I would, and out of his pocket he took an English picture paper and, unfolding it, spread it in front of me on the table here. I looked. It was a good picture of a beautiful lady with three children, a real bobby-dazzler, and the likeness of a painting done by one of the big guns in that line.

" 'You recognise her?' he asked.

" 'Yep!' said I, looking at the name underneath, for it had a handle to it, which I remarked upon.

" 'Oh,' laughed the golden boy that was, 'that came after, but Clara doesn't mind.'

"We talked of old days, and he told us a heap about Clara, whom he fair worships, and when he went he left the paper, and said he'd remember us to Clara. He's a decent sort is Clara's man, nearly as decent as Clara herself."

I waited whilst the prospector puffed stolidly at his pipe, then I gave a hint.

"The picture? You were to show me."

"So I was."

He went to a shelf, took down a book which had formed part of the fine circulating library of the Miners' Association in the days of Circle's prosperity, opened it, and laid it on the table before me. Gummied on the page was the picture of which he had spoken. I looked at it once, and then I whistled in amazement.

"You know Clara?" asked the prospector.

"Yes," I said, then looked at him suspiciously. "You've not just been pitching a yarn——" I began, only to be checked instantly.

"Nope! What I've told you is the cold, drawn truth. You ask her ladyship if it ain't, when next you meet her."

"I will," I vowed.

And at the last election I kept the vow. She was presiding at one of her husband's meetings and answering questions on his behalf. I passed up a question, written, as requested.

"Do you think Sir Harry will take the trail to Westminster with a 101 score?"

I saw her flush and then look round.

"Who sent this question?" she asked sharply.

"I did," I answered meekly.

She knows me and she laughed gaily.

"I'll talk to you afterwards. If it depends on me, the score that sends Sir Harry to Westminster will not be 101, but a 1001."

It wasn't quite that, but it was near enough not to matter, and having been talked to by Single O Clara, her husband had my vote, as he would have had in any case, for I agree with the derelict at Circle, and Clara's man is a decent sort—nearly as decent as Clara herself.



ONE SUMMER NIGHT.

THE woods went still, the starry gardens broke
 Into swift blossom all about your head,
 And sweetly in an unstirred shadowy oak
 The new moon drew her narrow golden thread.

Oh, on that night such magic was begun,
 Such strange delight and such wide wonderment,
 As shall remain when everything is done,
 And all the million moons and stars are spent.

When God has dipped His torches in the sea,
 I shall remember, in some radiant place,
 How two stood once beneath a tall black tree
 And said Love's ancient secrets face to face.

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.

ROSIE'S PORTRAIT

By H. W. WESTBROOK

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

RODDIE SILLERY went down to stop with the Yuanots, cousins of his—fine old house, lodge, park, and everything. In art, Roddie was now at the parting of the ways. Hitherto an artist of the bunch of grapes school, he was about to paint portraits.

He was glad to visit the Yuanots. His Chelsea studio was all very well, but it was riparian. He wanted a breath of fresh air. He was eager to make a start at portrait-painting, and he could paint Rosie.

I pass on to Rosie. Not a bad-looking girl. A little apt, perhaps, to make you an apple-pie bed, faintly inclined to lay booby-traps, but good-natured to a fault.

She had never treated Roddie as quite so much of a joke as the rest of the Yuanot gang had done. Roddie and she had been rather pals ever since they were so high. She even kept her temper when she saw the portrait of her that Roddie painted. It was a noxious thing. It must be got rid of. Yet she was incapable of hurting Roddie's feelings. Her family had always ragged him about his painting, and she knew that he took it seriously.

They were alone in the music-room, and for a moment she was at a loss for words as Roddie, inviting her to cease her pose and to come and inspect the canvas, stood complacently beside the easel. But when he said politely, "Well, it's done at last, and I have enjoyed doing it," her brain clicked. There was a way by which she could expel the atrocity without wounding the painter.

She went up to him and said: "Roddie, I want you to keep that picture of me. When you go away, take it with you."

Roddie was dumbfounded. "But I can't do that, Rosie. Your father is buying it as a matter of course."

"You mustn't let it be seen. You must take it away with you at once."

"I don't know what you mean. I've been counting on selling your portrait to Uncle John. I can do with the money, too."

"Dad doesn't mean to pay more than thirty pounds at the outside. If you economise in other ways, you won't feel the loss, Roddie."

"But why? Why shouldn't I sell the picture to Uncle John? It's the normal course—Dropped something?"

She raised her eyes from the floor. "Roddie," she said somewhat intensely, "this time we have had together has been so happy."

"Oh, rather, I should think so," said Roddie. "Top-hole."

"There's been a sort of I-and-you-ness in the last month, and I should like you to keep the memory of it, which is in my portrait. If you sell it to the Dad, and it is hung in the dining-room, somehow everything will be spoilt. Do you think I'm awfully sentimental?"

"I like you for it, Rosie."

He covered up the portrait, took it to his room, packed it and departed with it to London.

The passing of the picture was unnoticed. Roddie's painting really didn't count, and Sebastian Malgrith had just arrived, who, within a week, was engaged to be married to Rosie. He was an extremely rich man.

The marriage was a success, marred only by the fact that Sebastian got into the habit of telling Rosie that she had the most beautiful face in the whole world.

"The most wonderfully beautiful face of any woman in the whole big world." Those were his very words. Can you blame Rosie for becoming so bossy?

People were beginning to fade away at her approach, and her elder brother, Bob, a kindly creature, made a strong but unsuccessful appeal to her common-sense. "It is hard on you, I know," he said in his understanding way, "and I dare say, if I were in your shoes, I should be the same as you, and pop about looking like a lemon. It's good old Sebastian's fault. But do take a tug at yourself. You've nothing to hang

flags out about, and the airs you give yourself are a piercing shriek."

Rosie was reasonable enough. "You are quite right, Bob," she said. "But you'll admit that Sebastian makes it difficult not

She wondered whether Roddie had kept it, and how he was getting on. She had lost touch with her cousin. The Malgriths, after



"There was a way by which she could expel the atrocity without wounding the painter."

to be swollen-headed. He is so dreadfully insidious."

And then she remembered her portrait.

travelling incessantly, had only lately settled down in Grosvenor Street. Sebastian knew nothing of art, and cared less.

Rosie looked for Roddie's name in the Telephone Directory, and went out to see him at an address in St. John's Wood.

The studio was enormous, palatial. It was filled, crammed, with a most affluent crowd of people. Roddie surpassed belief—spats, pointed beard.

She had expected to find the ghost of the raw-boned youth whom they used to have to stay for the holidays. Roddie, on the contrary, was *soigné* to a degree.

"Roddie," she said, "have you still kept my portrait?"

"Of course I have, Rosie," he replied. "It's over there." He pointed to where the crowd was thickest. A babel of Yiddish, Greek, French, and South American rose from it, and they were all praising Rosie's portrait.

Roddie told her that his career had been an unbroken success. The old hard-up Chelsea days, he said, seemed incredible now. He added that whenever he looked at her portrait he remembered so vividly the halcyon month that they had spent together whilst he painted it.

"I could not bear to part with it," he said, "and the critics tell me that it is in some respects my best work. They see a peculiar something in it which I have never quite reproduced."

Rosie's heart warmed to Roddie. He had been so dog-like in his retention of the picture. She heard on good authority that he had refused twelve hundred guineas for it a few weeks ago. He had made her a celebrity. She was the original of the Sillery that Could Not be Bought.

After she had seen the portrait a few more times she felt that it ought to be in the hall of Stansfield House, their Grosvenor Street home.

She broke the news to Roddie with her usual good-nature. "It's not because I think the less of our you-and-I time," she murmured. "Nothing can alter that. But it doesn't seem right that the picture should be here. I'll send Sebastian to buy it to-morrow morning."

"All right, Rosie," said Roddie. "I suppose you know best."

Sebastian arrived, cheque-book in pocket, and was led up to the presentment of Rosie's face.

"It's very like her, isn't it, Sebastian?"

Sebastian gasped. He gazed at the illuminating portraiture as though he were a man coming out of a trance.

"And that is Rosie?" he whispered.

"Yes, there she is. Goodish likeness, eh, Sebastian?"

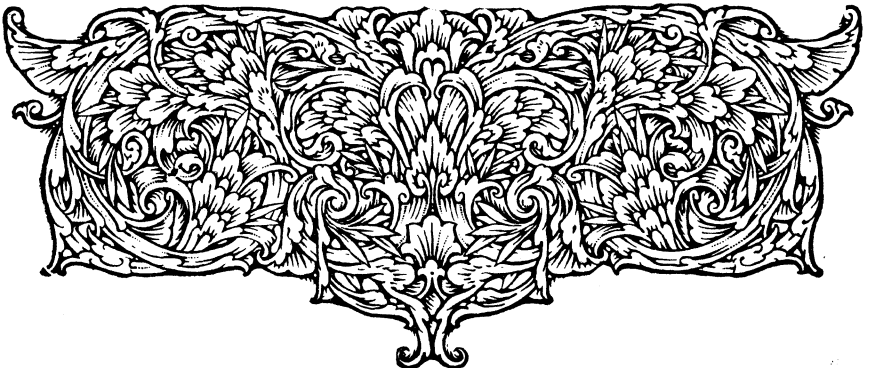
"Goodish likeness! Rosie!" Sebastian suddenly saw red. "You wretched dauber, how dare you insult my wife!"

In the midst of the *mêlée* Rosie was announced by the butler, who, with her assistance, in addition to the help of two well-nourished and willing footmen, separated the two men.

The affair was hushed up: the picture came to Stansfield House, and Roddie took Sebastian's cheque.

And in a way it has all ended happily. Because just when Sebastian is on the point of telling Rosie that her face is the most wonderfully beautiful face in the whole big world, he catches sight of the painting that Roddie did, and he sees what Rosie must have looked like to the trained eye of a recognised prince of portrait-painters. So he checks himself and simply says "Dear old thing!" or words to that effect.

It is so good for Rosie.





"Powers hit a beautiful four to long-off just as the little party arrived."

A HALF-DAY MATCH

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

IT was A. K. Barleybeer, the poet, who founded and captained the Sybarites.

He was also honorary secretary and committee. He would also have been groundsman if the Sybarites had possessed a ground, which they did not. They played country house cricket when opportunity occurred; failing that, they played village cricket.

Barleybeer always declared that village cricket was the ideal game. Other cricket, he said, had been debased by professionalism, gate-money, and billiard-table wickets. The real thing was to be found only on the village green and on the pitch improvised by gardeners in the ring park. As a matter of fact, all cricket should have

come alike to him, since he seldom made a run. He was an inveterate spooner-up of long hops; he played back at half volleys. But before and after the match, in the gun-room or in the bar of "The Barley Mow," as the case might be, he drank deep draughts and enjoyed his cricket enormously.

The other regular members of the Sybarites were no better. They were rabbits to a man, yet they won a fair percentage of their matches. For Barleybeer always took the precaution to beg, borrow, or steal two or three county players or University Blues, upon whom the serious business of the matches devolved. Thus Leonard Powers received a note from him one morning in June.

Leonard Powers is, of course, L. G. M. Powers, the old Cambridge Blue and crack Middlesex batsman. He was vaguely aware that he had met Barleybeer once or twice at Cambridge. The acquaintanceship had been distinctly of the "nodding" variety, and Powers was a little surprised to hear from the poet-cricketer, and still more surprised at the cheerful warmth of his letter:—

MY DEAR POWERS (it ran),—

I see Middlesex won't be playing this Wednesday, so can you turn out for my side, the Sybarites, against Denyer's side at Rickston Peveril? I hear he's got some pretty stout people playing for him, so I am taking retaliatory measures. Hodgkinson has promised to play for me, and I am snaffling a couple of ground bowlers from the Oval. Do turn out if you can, and Denyer says don't bother to pack any dress-clothes. We start at two o'clock. Most convenient train leaves Paddington at 11.43, but Hodgy is giving me a lift down in his car, so I'll hope to see you down at Rickston. Please wire reply.

Yours ever,

ALASTAIR K. BARLEYBEER.

Powers took ten minutes to think it over. He lived for cricket. On the other hand, he did not care for playing it on a ground where one is likely to be caught at long-slip off one's jawbone, and given out for it by Varmer Giles as umpire. Also, as he had not seen Barleybeer for eight years, and had never said more than ten consecutive words to him, there was an element of cheek in his invitation. Comparative strangers do not write to Mark Hambourg inviting him to play on an untuned piano at a village concert.

He read the note again. Denyer was probably Wallace Denyer, who was with him at Trinity. It would be rather nice to see Denyer again. And cricket—even village cricket—was still cricket. So he wrote curtly:

Yes, I'll turn out for you. Am ringing up Lord's, telling them to send my bag on to you. Perhaps you wouldn't mind giving it a lift down, as I shall go on my motor-bike.

He looked up Rickston Peveril on the map. It was in Berkshire, and he estimated the distance as some sixty miles

out of London. He could travel by the Bath Road most of the way, and the Bath Road is a good road. Given a fine day, it would make a pleasant little run.

Now, although Powers could drive a motor-cycle, he was no mechanic. Thus, when anything went wrong with his machine, he was forced to depend entirely on the nearest garage proprietor. These wayside Barrabases invariably hailed him with joy, and left him wondering why his machine never suffered from minor ailments. It always had something the matter with it to the extent of at least two guineas.

On the morning of the match his mechanical steed bore him faithfully for a few miles past Reading. It then behaved like one of those horses on which you and I, dear reader, have been foolish enough to put a little of our money. It slowed down for no apparent reason, and, stopping, forced Powers to dismount. He rested it against the bank at the side of the road and stared at it sorrowfully.

"Confound you, Tishy!" he said.

He was, it seemed, some distance from anywhere. Two alternatives faced him. Either he could go in quest of civilisation, shoving the treacherous piece of mechanism through the dust, or he could wait for the arrival of the Good Samaritan—the strange fellow who is never happy unless he has a monkey wrench in his hand, a smut on his nose, and lubricating oil in his hair. It was a hot day, and the more Powers thought about the first alternative, the less it attracted him. Besides, as they always charged him handsomely at the garages, decency compelled them to keep him waiting two or three hours for his machine, and this would make him late for the match. Much better was it, it seemed, to mount guard beside his fallen steed and assume an air of manly pathos.

For five minutes nothing happened. Then a small cart hove in sight, drawn by a fast-trotting donkey and driven by a small boy, who smote it rhythmically with a Harry Lauder walking-stick. The boy, who was apparently taking some vegetables for a drive, told Powers that his back wheel was not revolving. Powers pretended not to hear him.

A few more minutes, and then a Rolls-Royce shot up out of the distance. It contained Sir Izzybaum Gordon, the fried fish king, who was smoking a cigar—with the band on—such as he had been told were supplied to the House of Lords. The dust-

coated chauffeur dared not notice Powers, and Sir Izzybaum Gordon declined to see him. It was by concentrating entirely on himself and ignoring the needs of others that he was no longer in the Ghetto, but the proprietor of an ancient Scottish castle and, incidentally, an ancient Scottish name.

Powers was beginning to forget about him when a little two-seater swung round the corner, driven by a girl. It slowed down and stopped opposite him. A fresh young voice inquired :

"Can I be of any help?"

Powers swept off cap and goggles and regarded the fair Samaritan with approval. She belonged to that type which looks hardly English, having black hair, bright dark eyes, and a dusky warmth of colouring. In his callow days he had collected picture postcards of actresses who were not unlike her.

"It's tremendously kind of you," he said, "but I wouldn't trouble you for worlds. I'm no mechanic at all. I don't know what sort of a breakdown I've had."

He was torn between two motives. Decency would not let him allow her to tinker with his wretched bicycle. On the other hand, here was a chance of making an extremely desirable acquaintance.

"I'm no mechanic either, I'm afraid," said the girl. "I can just drive, that's all. Can I give you a lift anywhere?"

"It's most frightfully good of you. But there's the bike. If I leave it there, somebody who could put it right might come along and take a fancy to it. Rather a nuisance, too. I'm playing not very far from here, and I don't want to be late."

"Playing?" she repeated. "You're not one of the Sybarites, are you?"

He brightened visibly. "Yes."

"Then I can take you along. We were expecting you, but not quite so early. The others are coming on by train, I suppose?"

"Yes." He was regarding her curiously. This couldn't be Denyer's sister. He had met her once in the May Week, and she would be thirty now, if a day. Still, she must be some relative of Denyer's, and, on the whole, it was a most fortunate encounter. "If you would be so frightfully kind as to give me a lift, I'd be tremendously grateful," he added. "But there's this wretched bike."

"There's a garage a mile up the road," she answered; "we could tell them to send a man up to fetch it, and you could collect it on your way back."

"Splendid!" he exclaimed. "I'm ever so grateful. By the way, may I introduce myself? My name's Powers—Leonard Powers."

She received the information coldly, with the least inclination of the head. No illuminating smile curved her lips. Here, evidently, was a girl who did not read her "Wisden." For her there was no magic in the name.

"Will you get in?" she said, pleasantly enough, but with a certain aloofness. "I think you will find plenty of room."

He noticed for the first time that a number of parcels were strapped to the "dicky," and others occupied the remaining limited space of the car. Advancing, he helped her to pack them, so as to make room for himself. He then got in beside her, and started on what proved to be one of the most eventful journeys of his life.

If Powers had expected the girl to become effusive on learning that he was playing for the Sybarites, and therefore, presumably, a fit person to know, he was disappointed. She had greeted him with the freemasonry of the open road. Since he had introduced himself, she grew chilly without actually freezing, treating him with the aloof politeness which she might have bestowed on somebody else's groom. You will notice—as he noticed—that she did not tell him her name when he told her his.

Three minutes later they stopped outside a garage at the head of a village street. Powers gave instructions to one of the mechanics concerning the derelict motorcycle, and they continued on their way.

On the resumed journey he tried hard to begin conversation, which was difficult for two reasons. The girl's demeanour did not invite small-talk, and the rush of wind and the noise of the engine were additional obstacles.

"I think," said Powers, after much reflection, "that it's going to keep fine."

The girl inclined her head a little towards him.

"I think it's going to keep fine," he repeated.

"I'm sorry, I can't quite hear you," said the little lady.

"I think it's going to keep fine," said Powers, by this time more miserably conscious than ever of the banality of the remark.

To his horror the girl slowed down the car almost to a halt and looked at him inquiringly.

"I'm sorry," she said, "but I can never hear a thing when I'm driving. You were saying——"

"I was only saying I thought it would be fine," murmured the wilting Powers.

"Oh!" said the girl, with the least frown, and the car shot forward once more. Powers made no further attempt at small-talk during the drive.

They left the Bath Road after a while and threaded a maze of lanes, bumping over surfaces which had to be driven over to be believed. They passed through two villages and came to a third, slowing down outside a long Georgian house whose front was flush with the road. Flags were fluttering from the great iron gateway beside it, and in the garden beyond he caught a glimpse of more flags and the gleam of a white marquee.

He got out and offered his hand to the girl, who, however, declined his assistance. Once more he made an effort to converse with her.

"Are we far from the ground?" he asked.

"The ground?" she repeated.

"I mean, where are we playing?" he translated.

"Oh, in the garden!"

"The garden!"

"You generally do play out of doors in the summer, don't you?" she said.

Powers had no reply to make to the remark. She was being, he thought, infernally sarcastic for no reason at all. He searched his brain in vain to think of anything he had said which could possibly have offended her. But cricket in the garden! Surely she meant in a field at the back? And why was the place *en fête*? It looked to him as if there were going to be an open-air bazaar or a flower show instead of a village cricket match.

She let him into the house and motioned him towards an oak staircase. "Your

dressling-room is in the library," she said. "I'll show you the way."

He climbed the stairs behind her, sorely troubled in his mind. At the top she threw open the door of a room lined with books, in which there stood a great packing-case. He also noticed that three or four cheap



"Quick as thought, Mr. Bullitt snatched up his discarded garments and made a dive for the door."

mirrors had been placed on the shelves at a convenient height. The girl indicated the packing-case with the least gesture of a shapely hand.

"Your costumes have arrived," she said. "and everything is ready for you when you want to black your face."

At some time or other there come to most of us sensations that we are experiencing in our waking hours some extravagant sort of dream. Powers experienced the sensation then. He fell back a step and stared at the girl, his lips ajar.

"Black my face!" he repeated. "Black my f——"

"It's usual, isn't it?" she said coldly.

"Usual? Oh, yes, usual!" He found that he, too, could be sarcastic. "Usual? Oh, yes, quite usual!"

His hostess turned away. "There's the bell," she said over her shoulder, "if you want anything."

probably transpire to be a charitable cause, but he wished the girl had treated him a little less distantly. When she heard of his importance in the cricket world, perhaps she would be ashamed of herself and he would be magnanimous.

With this in his mind, he began to explore the horrors in the packing-case. He found



"Powers followed the direction of his gaze and then went over to the window."

Left to himself, it began to dawn upon Powers that he—L. G. M. Powers—had been inveigled into playing in a comic cricket match. He did not approve comic cricket matches. Cricket he regarded as a sacred thing. Not that he was unwilling to make a fool of himself for what would

royal blue Eton jackets, white peg-top trousers, red, white and blue waistcoats and neckties, and collars which were evidently meant to parody those worn by the late Mr. Gladstone. Groaning in spirit, he found garments which fitted him more or less, and proceeded to get into them. He also

found lamp-black and vaseline, with which he proceeded to anoint his countenance. For the moment we will leave him at this melancholy pursuit.

II.

HAVING left Powers in the library, Miss Doris Castleton tripped downstairs into the drawing-room, where her mother was being talked to by Mr. Jabez Bullitt.

If you looked at Mr. Bullitt's feet, you would immediately guess that he was a detective, and you would guess correctly.

"Yes, ma'am," Bullitt was saying, "there's a lot of it goin' on. There's a garden-party at a private 'ouse—or a bazaar like what you've got—and along comes some well-dressed feller who walks in—even pretends to be an entertainer sometimes—and then robs the house when everybody's enjoying themselves. You was quite wise in getting me down here, ma'am, quite wise."

Mrs. Castleton turned as her daughter entered.

"I've got everything, mother," said Doris, "except that I couldn't get enough coloured candles. There's a famine of them in Reading."

"I've got a disappointment for you, I'm afraid, my dear," said Mrs. Castleton. "The jazz band isn't coming. I was nearly desperate when I got their letter. However, the vicar has marshalled the drum and fife band of the Boy Scouts, who are able to play 'Bubbles' and some other nice tunes, and I dare say we shall manage."

Doris had inflicted several surprises. It was now her turn to endure one. She stared at her mother fixedly.

"Do you really mean that the jazz band—the Sybarites—aren't coming?"

"That's what I say, my dear. I had a letter from their manager by the second post just after you'd gone. They were all in that railway accident yesterday, and terribly shaken up—most of them in hospital with bruises and cuts. Why?"

"Only," said Doris, "one of them is upstairs now."

Mr. Bullitt pricked his ears almost visibly.

"I picked him up on the road," said Doris. "His motor-cycle had broken down. It occurred to me to ask him if he were one of the Sybarites, and he said he was."

"He would," said Mr. Bullitt, getting all his dramatic effect by repression.

"What do you mean?" said Mrs. Castleton.

"I was expecting something of the sort," said Bullitt. "I was warning you of what might happen, mum, and then up comes this young lady to prove my very words." He assumed a magisterial air. "What's this man like, may I ask, miss?"

Doris laughed lightly.

"Oh, he's about thirty, with curly brown hair. Speaks well and has rather nice manners. He told me his name was Powers. He isn't a bit like——"

"They never are," replied Mr. Bullitt darkly.

"I noticed," said Doris, after some reflection, "that he didn't want to black his face."

"Nor would you, miss, and nor should I, if we were going to rob a house."

Mrs. Castleton had turned a little pale, and was regarding the detective out of large, scared eyes.

"I think you must be right, Mr. Bullitt," she said breathlessly. "We know the man upstairs can't be one of the Sybarites, because they're not coming. And if he isn't one of the Sybarites, why did he say he was?"

"That's just it, mum," said Mr. Bullitt. "He gives himself away proper this time. Just you leave him to me."

The poor lady stared from one to the other in dismay. Her bazaar and garden fête in aid of Samoan orphans seemed foredoomed to disaster. Firstly, the principal attraction had failed to materialise, and now there was a swell mobsman upstairs, who would doubtless have robbed her of her dearest possessions were it not for the presence of Mr. Bullitt.

The brave Mr. Bullitt turned stolidly towards the door with an air of modest valour. They heard him stamping upstairs. He reached the library just as Powers was putting the last touches to his ebony-coloured face. In the costume affected by the members of the jazz band he was a veritable feast of colour. Mr. Bullitt, with all his experience, was a little startled by the spectacle.

Powers greeted him wearily.

"I suppose you're one of Barleybeer's men," he said.

Mr. Bullitt, playing up to him, winked.

"When do we start, do you know?" Powers inquired, picking up his cigarette-case from the table, where he had laid it down.

"We had better wait until they are all in the garden," said Mr. Bullitt, with another wink. "You're a bit early. The show isn't due to start for an hour or so. Hullo, look at that airship!"

Mr. Bullitt had suddenly stared at the window with an air of concentration.

Powers followed the direction of his gaze and then went over to the window. Quick as thought, Mr. Bullitt snatched up his discarded garments and made a dive for the door. Seeing no airship, and hearing the key turn in the lock, Powers had swung round upon his heels.

"Here, what the devil——" he roared.

"You're all right, my lad," said Bullitt softly. "I don't think you can break down the door, and, if you do, you won't get very far in that rig-out. I'm just off to find the policeman. Back in ten minutes!"

Powers stared, gasped, pinched himself twice, flung himself down in a chair, and gave himself up to bewildered misery. In a world of lunatics what chance had a sane man?

* * * * *

Barleybeer and Hodgkinson, driving in the latter's Daimler, were passing through a village some six miles from their destination, Rickston Peveril, when they beheld a most unusual sight. Out of a first-floor window of a long Georgian house, running flush with the road, leaned a coloured gentleman gorgeously arrayed, who was gesticulating wildly and evidently signalling to them.

"If you can see him, too," said Barleybeer, "he must undoubtedly be there. I don't mind telling you I thought at first he was an alcoholic fantasy. Let's stop and see what the vision wants with us."

The car drew up.

"Hodgkinson—Barleybeer! For Heaven's sake! I'm Powers!"

They looked at each other.

"It's his voice," said Hodgkinson, "but he's got a bit sunburnt since I last saw him."

Barleybeer interrupted himself in the middle of a fit of silent laughter to comment on the victim's clothes.

"Just the thing," he said, "for a quiet evening at the club, but hardly right for a cricket match, Powers, old man."

"For Heaven's sake, don't sit there talking!" yelled Powers. "They're sending for the police."

"On the whole, I don't know that I blame them," remarked Hodgkinson.

"I'm locked in. Drive the car right under the window. I'm going to jump."

The car was a covered one, with a flat roof for luggage. Powers landed on it safely, and a few moments later he was scrambling inside. As Hodgkinson started it again, there were cries from the house, and half a dozen people came tumbling out in their wake. They left the village with a hue and cry behind them.

III.

THE cricket match at Rickston Peveril took place on the village green, on a wicket which Denyer, the captain of the home side, truthfully enough described as "sporting." A footpath crossed the pitch at one end where a good-length ball was likely to land, and it made a useful "spot" for a bowler to aim at.

Powers, who did not bowl in first-class cricket, had steam to work off, so he went on and bowled "slingers." Rickston Peveril were all out for forty-eight, three of its men having become casualties. Nothing like even this moderate total would have been reached but for the local blacksmith, who, wearing a bowler hat, one ancient pad, and braces, stopped the ball with every part of his anatomy and without apparent suffering.

There followed ten minutes' interval, and then Powers—who had removed nearly every trace of lamp-black from his face—together with Hodgkinson, went in to open the innings of the Sybarites.

Meanwhile things had been happening. Six miles away a little village had been thrown into a state of ferment by the capture of a daring criminal and his subsequent dramatic escape. But the number of the car had been taken, and that number was travelling over wires to every part of the country. In a little more than an hour the car was discovered, garaged at "The Eavesdropper's Arms," Rickston Peveril.

Twenty minutes after its discovery another car set out in its wake. It contained Mr. Bullitt, a policeman, and Doris—Doris having seen the frustrated criminal before he blacked his face, had come to identify him.

Inquiries at "The Eavesdropper's Arms" proved fruitful. Yes, one of the gentlemen had arrived in fancy dress with his face blacked. He said he had done it for a wager. He and the other gentlemen were now playing cricket on the green.

As the party of three moved off to the green, Doris was beginning to suspect that

there must be some mistake. She knew that Raffles played cricket, but never—surely never—in quite the same circumstances. But the two men of the law seemed to have no doubt on the subject.

Powers hit a beautiful four to long-off just as the little party arrived.

"That's the man," she said. "The man who hit the ball so hard."

The policeman and Mr. Bullitt exchanged glances and then marched slowly in the direction of the wickets. This was going to be a dramatic arrest such as every policeman secretly yearns for. The whole history of crime could scarcely show its equal.

A small boy's voice, raised in disgust, penetrated Doris's thoughts.

"It's all up now," it said mournfully. "The Sybbyrites is thirty-four for no wickets."

Doris turned upon him, her eyes round with amazement.

"The Sybarites!" she cried. "Did you say the Sybarites?"

"Yes, miss. Rickston Peveril is playin' the Sybbyrites. And the Sybbyrites ought to win, too. They've got county men playing for them. That's L. G. M. Powers batting at this end, miss."

"Powers! Did you say Powers?"

"Yes, miss. He plays for Middlesex. What I say, miss, is—it isn't 'ardly fair——"

The interest of the spectators had been already intrigued by the sight of a policeman

and a man in plain clothes marching towards the wickets. Excitement rose to fever heat when a lady, whom some of them recognised as Miss Castleton of The Grange, Wilkeley, rushed after them, calling wildly to them to come back.

* * * * *

"But you will come, won't you, and stay to dinner?" Doris begged.

"It's kind of you, Miss Castleton," Powers said, "but I should think you've seen enough of me for one day."

"If you'd only told me you were going to play cricket!"

"If *you'd* only told *me* you thought I was going to play in a jazz band!"

"It never struck me that a cricket club would give itself such a name."

"It's an absurd name for a gang of jazzers."

"If you'll only come to dinner, Mr. Powers, we shall know that there's no ill-feeling. And—and you'll have to come back to fetch your clothes, won't you?"

That, in brief, was the beginning of the affair.

* * * * *

Powers still plays cricket for Middlesex, and has taught his wife to take an intelligent interest in the game. But he never plays village cricket, and has a marked antipathy to that pastoral recreation. As for jazz bands, tactful people never so much as mention them in his hearing.

A LONDON FRAGMENT.

THE pear tree in the Finchley Road,
Where motor-'buses thunder by,
Stands radiant in its bridal dress,
Serene in whitest loveliness,
Against the dappled April sky—
The pear tree in the Finchley Road.

And in the fields down Wembley way,
Along whose roads the tramways go,
The larks' triumphant tireless song
Quivers to Heaven the whole day long;
And pearly hawthorn blossoms blow
Beside those fields down Wembley way.

L. G. MOBERLY.

CARNIVAL

By ETHEL M. RADBOURNE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

IN the tumult of the carnival Derrick felt himself a straw on the breast of a torrent. To follow a whim of his own meant futile struggle and defeat. Laughing, shouting, the crowds had him at their mercy. Faces pressed close to his, detail vivid in the flare of lanterns—bearded chins of men, velvet cheeks of maidens, withered faces of age, puling lips of infants. Scent was clamant against Derrick's nostrils—perfume from women's dresses, pungent cigar smoke, flowers crushed and trampled underfoot. The voice of the carnival lifted in a multitude of different sounds which merged and became a perfect symphony of mirth.

Derrick watched the crowd with delight. Men, women, and children were exalted for a time. They stood on a pinnacle of joy above the level of ordinary days. Derrick's face reflected the exaltation of these others. He was one with them, a comrade.

A man accosted Derrick jovially. "It goes well, this night, signor?"

"Excellently, and like a dream. One must awaken and find it gone." Derrick's halting rendering of the Italian tongue showed him a foreigner. "In my country we haven't such a setting for carnival. Your Italian nights were made for the purpose."

"Good, signor." The man laughed and passed on.

At a street corner a man sold coloured lanterns. They hung about the stall like vivid stars showing from darkness. Derrick purchased one and held it aloft as he moved.

"One more amongst a thousand," he laughed to himself. "From the air we must look like a colony of fireflies."

The crowd grew denser. It was impossible to move without chastising one's neighbour. Derrick, essaying to lower his lantern, heard a quick exclamation from a woman at his side.

"I'm so sorry. Clumsy of me." Then, realising that he had spoken in English, he produced stumbling Italian in its place.

The woman laughed, quickly, melodiously. "Do not trouble to translate; I understand."

"You speak English?"

Derrick turned his head to study his companion's face. She was a woman in the late twenties, tall, with an inimitable touch of grace in her carriage. She had the colouring of hair and skin that Derrick associated with women in Rossetti pictures.

"I saw you were not a native," she said. "No Englishman can act like an Italian at carnival. One must be born to the art."

He nodded. "You're right. There's a grace, an abandon, we can't acquire." With difficulty he lowered his lantern and extinguished it.

"But why?" she questioned. "At least you were trying to play the part."

"And using an arm that may serve to protect you in this throng," Derrick said gravely.

She let that pass without comment, but he felt her eyes intent on his face. Then abruptly she smiled at him with challenge, with a laughing realisation of carnival. Derrick realised that her smile was individual, was an integral part of her personality. One corner of her mouth lifted higher than the other, and this twisted smile was piquantly arresting. High on her left cheek-bone a dark mole made another challenge to the eye, and her voice, her poise, her play of expression, carried on that suggestion of challenge.

"You have lost your people in the throng?" Derrick questioned. He took her silence for consent, and added: "Until you find them, let me give my fellow-countrywoman what protection I can."

"Protection?" She held the word in momentary suspension. "That suggests comfortable things." She quoted his own words under her breath: "Using an arm that may serve to protect you in this throng." She smiled at him again. "That was really rather nice of you."

"The worst of it is, I can't *do* much. We're jammed here till the crowd takes it into its head to move."

"You can talk," she suggested. "You

village in the distance. Don't you see the spire of the little church, and hear the babble of a running brook, and the song of a missel-thrush?" She made a laughing gesture.



"Derrick turned his head to study his companion's face."

speaking my own tongue. It has rather a musical sound to an exile."

"Exile? In these days of quick transit? Our country's practically in the next parish."

She nodded. "But the next parish may seem a long way at times. Let us talk about——" She hesitated, then said hurriedly: "I'm picturing an English meadow on a sunny afternoon. There's a

"See the magic of your voice in a strange land."

Drawn by the blare of a band, the crowd swayed to the left. Presently Derrick and his companion found themselves on a kerbstone opposite the door of a restaurant. Behind and before them crowds blocked

their way. The open door spoke of temporary escape from tumult.

"Shall we go in?" Derrick suggested. "It means a seat for you till the crowd thins. Then I'll help you find your people."

She followed him in silence. Seated at a table presently, her silence still held. Derrick felt her eyes on him, keenly scrutinising. She had beautiful eyes, lips, profile. Heavy

"There's one thing I'd like to tell you if I shan't bore you. This afternoon I was in the Church of San Petronio. There's a painting near the west door—a Madonna. In this country one is always finding gems, but the wonder of that picture—you know it?—the sheer beauty of the artist's conception! Then to-night"—his words hesitated, then came deliberately—"for a



"Do not trouble to translate; I understand."

moment, when your face shone out of the crowd, it was as if the painting had come alive."

She pushed her coffee cup aside, and the spoon fell with a little clatter to the floor. Derrick stooped for it, his fingers clumsy. Impetuously he offered apologies for that last sentence.

"I ought not to have said that. It was cheek on the part of a stranger."

"You took my breath away for a moment.

bronze-coloured hair was drawn in coils about her head.

Derrick suddenly leant across the table.

No, it was not cheek." Her voice played with the word, laughed at it. "But one does not usually say things like that to a stranger."

"I know. Forgive me."

He stumbled through sentences that showed him contrite. When he fell silent, the sound of carnival filled the room with laughter, music, calling voices. Derrick was wondering why his companion's voice played persistently on some chord of memory.

Her gesture seemed to rebuke his silence. "Talk to me about an English autumn, when dusk falls early, and dead leaves make music under one's feet, and there's a scent of burning wood in the air, like incense."

Derrick pushed his cup aside. Sympathy tightened his throat.

"Why, you're longing for it all! I didn't know you meant the kind of exile that *hurts*. You'll go back some day. It will be ten times better because of the waiting time."

The crowd had moved now from the narrow funnel of the street. The cessation of noise claimed their attention. Derrick's companion got to her feet instantly and moved towards the door. Derrick followed. In a moment they were out in the still air of the night. The voice of Carnival was suddenly remote.

"In which direction shall we begin our search?" Derrick questioned.

"Our search?" Her voice halted, then fell to a quick minor note. "For my people? Dawn would find us still searching."

He looked at her in surprise, and she moved her hand in a quick gesture of finality.

"I am alone."

They were moving in the wake of the throng. Flowers, discarded ribbons, tinsel—the multitudinous litter of carnival lay about their feet. A paper lantern, dislodged from a window, fell to the ground and sent ribbons of flame into the night.

"Take care," Derrick said. "The flame nearly touched your feet."

"Protection!" She held the word gratefully. "You rise from the midst of carnival like the prince in the old fairy tales."

They were passing the flight of steps that led to the Church of San Petronio. Derrick came to a pause.

"Shall we go in for a minute? I see lights there."

She hesitated on the bottom step, glancing upwards. In the light of full moon they saw detail—carved doorway, illumined windows, stonework like lace held captive by the hand of Time.

"You know the legend the people recall on this night?"

"No," Derrick told her.

She commenced to mount the steps, and Derrick moved at her side.

"The story goes that this is the one night in the year when it's impossible to hate an enemy. The spirit of this particular carnival is potent. He weaves a magic spell over unforgiving hearts."

"A pretty conceit," Derrick said.

They had reached the massive entrance door. Derrick pushed it wide, and they moved into the still aisles of the church. After carnival this stillness was wonderful. The sound of their footsteps echoed amongst the archways. The echoes moved before them, like couriers, through the far-off reaches of the nave.

They came to a halt before the painting of the Madonna. Lighted candles showed detail of perfect artistry. The head was bent, brooding over the Child. The eyes held the essence of mother-love as a rose holds fragrance. The face expressed the soul of a woman as God would fashion her. She was purity. She was understanding. She was delicate humour. She was an echo of aspiration that points heavenward.

Derrick whispered presently: "It's a miracle to have imprisoned her on canvas."

His whisper went unanswered. Turning, he realised that the place at his side was empty. A sound of footfalls echoed from the shadowed nave. He heard the closing of a distant door.

Derrick turned away into the shadows, threading his way through them. Here and there he passed figures kneeling before the shrines. A peasant woman standing outside the door of San Petronio greeted him.

"May the good fortune of carnival attend you, signor."

Derrick paused tentatively.

"A lady passed through this door a few minutes ago. Could you tell me in which direction she went?"

"No, signor. I did not notice."

Derrick went down into the littered street. It was empty of the woman he looked for. She was irrevocably hidden by the cloak of night.

He could not but approve her manner of going. It was one with the spirit of carnival that she should come and go like something dreamt of, intangible and mysterious.

* * * * *

Derrick listened to the sound of the storm as he would have listened to the sound of

an orchestra played for his delight. It enhanced the luxury of his present surroundings. The tumult of the wind, the heavy fall of snowflakes, were background only. In the foreground comfort asserted itself—book-lined walls, deep-seated chairs, flowers, wood-stocked fire. The only light in the room came from the dancing flames. Here and there pools of darkness lay about the floor, and in far corners shadows held a hint of secrecy.

The wind in an accession of strength beat itself against the window-panes. "Hark to it!" Derrick said to himself. "And yesterday it was a gentle zephyr. Is there anything on earth so fickle as an English winter?"

Derrick's servant knocked at the door and opened it. "Shall I put the lights on, sir?"

"Lights? Why, no, Dawson. I want nothing better than firelight."

The man stooped for more logs and threw them on to the blaze. He went softly from the room, closing the door behind him.

As darkness deepened, lights and shadows in the room were accentuated—shafts of illumination, stretches of deep gloom. The moving light went like prying fingers to the edge of the shadows, touched them, drew back affrighted. Idly watching this play of the flames, Derrick suddenly leant forward in his chair. He could have sworn that a moving thread of light had fallen upon a woman's pointed shoe.

Derrick stooped to the fire and stirred it. The illumination thrust the shadows back, besieging them.

Derrick got to his feet with a sharp exclamation. "Am I dreaming? *Is it carnival again?* Your face came from the shadows, like the Madonna of San Petronio."

He switched lights on, so that every corner of the room showed clear.

"It is you. Are you the Spirit of Carnival come to study an English winter?"

"And approve it."

He remembered the music of her voice. He heard it now enhanced, accentuated.

"I am staying at a house near by. Somehow I missed my way in the storm. Then I stumbled on this garden." She laughed suddenly. "Your windows were unscreened, and one of them was unlatched. I saw your face in the firelight and tapped on the window-pane. But you ignored me."

"The storm must have dulled the sound,"

Derrick said. "I didn't hear." He glanced across at the window that opened on to the garden. "So you were out there in the storm whilst I sat here in luxury. But now——"

He wheeled a chair to the fire with an inviting gesture.

"Protection!" She nodded over the word. "I appear like a ghost from the night, and you grant me protection. No, I'm not cold. It's delicious to be in the heart of an English winter."

"I remember," Derrick's voice deepened. "You longed for it in exile."

She nodded, staring into the flames.

"I'm glad the exile is ended," Derrick said.

She stretched her hands towards the fire. "May I talk? I—I seem to require explanation."

Her smile was delicious. He remembered how piquantly arresting he had thought it. The mole high on her left cheekbone, the poise of her head, the heavy braids of her hair—he closed his eyes, momentarily visualising that night of carnival. Then, as now, something in her voice touched an elusive chord of memory.

"*Carnival!*" Her voice echoed the word as if he had spoken it aloud. She said quickly: "And the Spirit of Carnival, who was potent against thoughts of revenge?"

"Ah, yes," he remembered. "You told me of that as we mounted the steps of San Petronio."

She sat with her head half turned from Derrick. Now, in minor notes, her voice came rapidly.

"I was brought up in a kind of modern vendetta. For two generations there has been enmity between my branch of the family and that of the other Derricks. . . . You spoke?" She turned her head quickly.

"No," Derrick said.

She turned her eyes towards the flames again.

"The details would only bore you—an old story of one Derrick and another who were enemies. They were rivals in the same line of business. They loved the same woman. Roger Derrick won her—by stratagem, his cousin said."

"You"—Derrick's voice stumbled—"you—Evelyn Derrick?"

"The last of my branch. Somewhere in the world there's a Roger Derrick, the last of his branch. Oh, the whole story of vendetta is paltry!" She swung round in her chair, facing him. "How little things

hold one out of all proportion to their worth! I was brought up to think my very poverty was due to that other Derrick. As if the cleverness of one could account for the stupidity of another! Probably my ancestor lost ground because the other was infinitely the better man." She laughed softly. "Still, failure seemed to dog us. My father was a starveling artist, whilst my mother taught English to eke out a scanty living. They died out there in Italy, and I carried on the traditions. Then at last——"

She moved in her chair, so that he saw her, head tilted, exquisite in pose.

"One day Life smiled on me. Some far-off relative of my mother's left me a fortune—of three hundred pounds." She laughed, a lilting sound of mirth, of

carnival. "For a time that spells the end of exile."

Derrick laid a hand on the arm of her chair. "I am Roger Derrick."

Amazed, he heard the lilt of her laugh.

"I knew. Your face betrayed you that night of carnival. I had seen dozens of old family photographs. To your finger-tips you are a Derrick. Besides, you shouldn't leave directed envelopes about if you desire secrecy." She lifted one from the table at her elbow.



"'You'—Derrick's voice stumbled—'you—Evelyn Derrick?'"

"Should I have told my story to any save a Derrick?"

She rose from her chair then and drew her cloak hurriedly about her shoulders. She would have moved towards the unlatched window, but his hand came on her arm.

"Not again. I lost you once. Life shan't cheat me of you a second time."

"Ah, but I must come and go like the Spirit of Carnival," she laughed. "Don't spoil the effectiveness of my retreat."

Derrick said: "In this house your ancestor and mine played together as boys. They would have laughed then at the idea of enmity. They're *glad* Life heals the breach at last—like this."

He caught her hands and held



"The last of my branch. Somewhere in the world there's a Roger Derrick, the last of *his* branch."

them. He saw her exquisite, the essence of his dreams, the one woman he desired for mate.

A log, splintered and fallen apart, was vivid access of light in the room. They were caught into a circle of illumination.

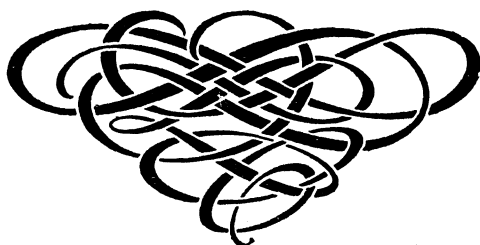
"Some day you'll come—and stay? You'll make it carnival for ever in my life?"

"Carnival and sanctuary," she said softly.

That last was eloquent. It transported

them to the dim aisles of San Petronio. Above their heads the face of the Madonna smiled in benediction.

The sound of the storm outside mimicked the far-off sound of carnival. The firelit room was sanctuary. In Derrek's eyes the face of this woman was like that of the artist's vision. She was purity. She was understanding. She was delicate humour. She was an echo of aspiration that points heavenward.



A SONG O' SOMERSET.

THE lilac's out in Somerset,
The lilac and the may,
And all the red, the burning earth
Is making holiday,

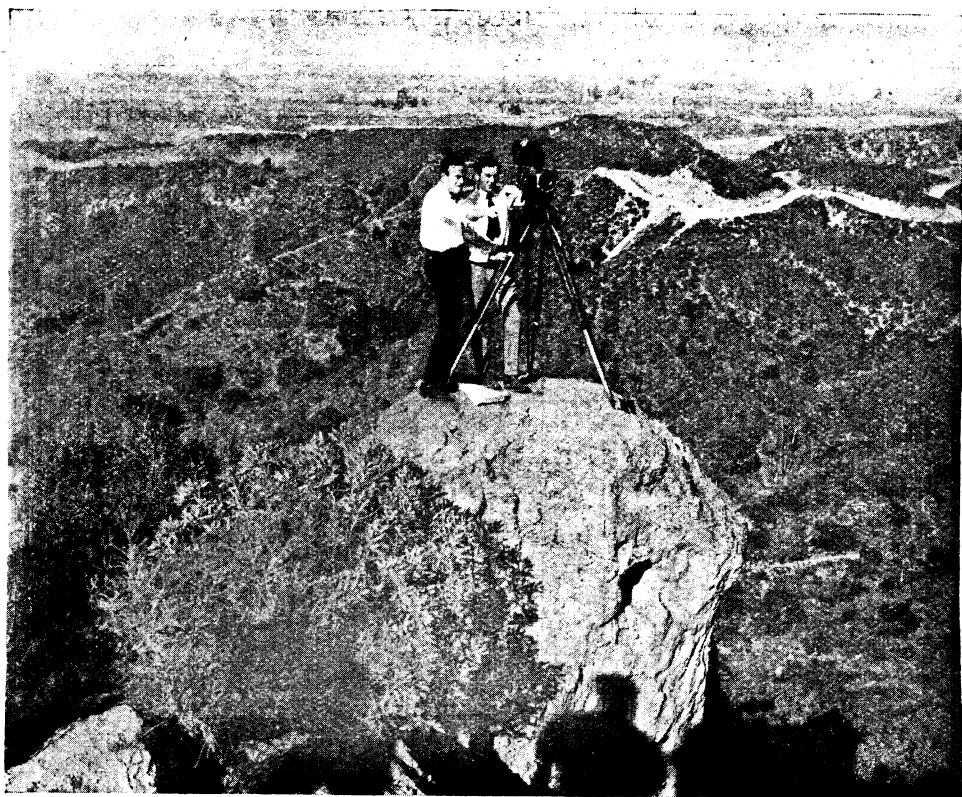
While apple trees and cherry trees,
Like rosy maids in snow,
Are magical in loveliness
Wherever you shall go.

There's nothing quite like Somerset
To drive you mad in Spring—
The scent and the content of it,
The way the thrushes sing;

The very depth and colour
In the glory of its green
Is deeper than all depth of joy
That may or might have been!

And if the Angel Raphael
Takes walks with mortals yet,
I know he catches up with them
Somewhere in Somerset!

CLAUDINE CURREY,



FILMING A SCENE ON A DIZZY HEIGHT IN THE HOLLYWOOD MOUNTAINS FOR THE PARAMOUNT PICTURE
"BEYOND THE ROCKS."

REALISING REMOTE LOCALITIES FOR THE SETTINGS OF CINEMA PLAYS

By M. OWSTON-BOOTH

RARE is the motion picture that does not necessitate at least one "location trip." Although less work than formerly is done outside the studio precincts, owing to the fast-developing art of simulating Nature indoors, there are still—and always must be—many occasions when satisfactory settings can only be obtained by going out to them.

There is no hard and fast law governing a producer's choice between real and created scenes, except, perhaps, the relative quantity of the settings required. It is seldom worth while to transport players and camera-men many miles for "action" that shows a

single aspect of Nature, for to create such a scene artificially, whatever its geographical features, is well within the scope of the property man's ingenuity. On the other hand, it is impossible to fake inside the studio a number of different viewpoints of a locale.

Between these two illustrative extremes lie many cases where a producer must be guided by accepted principles of artistry or—more often—by his own instinct for the ultimate effect, in addition to the particular needs of the story being told.

The needs of the story might seem to be of more importance in this connection than

is implied above. It is difficult for the public to realise to what extent a producer of motion pictures can depend upon his art department for the provision of all necessities. An author can rarely invent or portray an exterior effect that cannot be built up by studio experts within a few hours.

A striking exception was provided by Byron Morgan when he wrote the story of "The Gold Diggers," known in the original as "The Hell Diggers," a story of gold mining—which, of course, is still one of

exterior scenes, and the company working on the picture spent several weeks at one of the big mines near Sacramento, California.

As may be imagined, a notice on the studio call-board reading "Location work to-morrow" is generally welcomed. In a sense it provides a vacation for studio-weary players; at least, it promises that even to the most experienced and disillusioned in prospect, though the result quite often guarantees contentment with studio heat, stuffiness, and glaring lights for many weeks to come.



MR. PENRHYN STANLAWS, THE ARTIST—WHOSE MANY CLEVER DRAWINGS IN THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE ARE WELL REMEMBERED—MRS. TOM MOORE AND BETTY COMPTON ON LOCATION IN TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA, WITH THE TEMPERATURE TWENTY DEGREES BELOW ZERO, FILMING MR. STANLAWS' PRODUCTION "OVER THE BORDER," A PARAMOUNT PICTURE.

the leading industries of California—under modern methods. On account of the immensity of the dredges that dig for the yellow metal, known in mining circles as "hell diggers," it would almost surely have proved necessary to visit the actual location for the making of a single scene in which these machines appeared. No test of the property man's powers for the rest of the local colour actually arose, however, for this story consisted almost entirely of

It was so in the case of the Penrhyn Stanlaws Company after making "Over the Border" at seven thousand five hundred feet above sea-level and thirty degrees below zero, in five feet of snow. The cold was so intense that it was impossible for the players to work except during the middle hours of the day—an inconvenience which necessitated a much extended trip and, consequently, heavy expenditure.

Similar conditions existed during the



ELECTRICIANS ERECTING A LIGHTING APPARATUS AT A SPOT WHERE THE TEMPERATURE IS TWENTY DEGREES BELOW ZERO FOR SOME NIGHT SCENES IN THE PENRHYN STANLAWS PICTURE "OVER THE BORDER," A PARAMOUNT FILM.

production of "The Valley of Silent Men," one of James Oliver Curwood's North-West stories. Almost the entire action of the picture was photographed in the Canadian Rockies, against magnificent mountain scenery. The chief players—Lew Cody and Alma Rubens—had to spend several hours every day for more than a week in the glaciers.

About the making of sea scenes there is always divided opinion in the studios, and for those who can work best on *terra firma* there is little pleasure to be expected from a marine location. Seeing that the cast is chosen for histrionic reasons purely and simply, it is really amazing that such pictures as "Moran of the *Lady Letty*," full of rough seas, perilous voyages, shipwrecks

and thrilling mutiny, ever get made. When Dorothy Dalton, who bore the brunt of the worst events of this sea drama, set foot in the studio afterwards, she laughingly suggested that the story had been selected for production to keep down catering expenses for a few weeks.

Catering is, of course, one of the great complications of location work. It arises as a fresh problem, to be settled in a new way every time. When large companies go on location, as in the case of "The Sheik,"

the primitive life for weeks at a stretch on location.

Perhaps the most experienced out-door worker in motion pictures is William S. Hart, whose friends claim that if he were turned loose in the woods or mountains with only a knife, he could live indefinitely. His life is just one location trip after another, very few of his productions permitting him to work in the studio for more than an average of one day in the week.

Not long ago Hart took a party of city



SOLVING A QUERY DURING THE TAKING OF A LOCATION SCENE FOR THE PARAMOUNT PICTURE OF SIR JAMES BARRIE'S "THE LITTLE MINISTER": PENRHYN STANLAWS RE-READING THE SCRIPT; GEORGE HACKATHORNE AS THE LITTLE MINISTER, AND BETTY COMPSON AS LADY BABBIE.

it is necessary to engage a transport of wagons and automobile trucks to carry the cooking stoves and provisions, as well as the sleeping tents; but, as a general rule, location parties consist merely of the principals in the picture and a small number of minor players or "extras." In these cases the principals almost always cook their own meals. It would certainly astonish those people who have heard only of the pampered, luxurious lives supposed to be lived by cinema stars to see them enduring

men with him into the mountain fastnesses. They thought they were in for a thoroughly miserable trip; but after their first meal, cooked by the star himself and eaten under the trees, they began to look happier. Then nightfall came and Hart showed them how to make up a bed of dry leaves, and it was only the smell of breakfast that induced them to rise in the morning.

To return to "The Sheik," which was photographed on a property desert of vast dimensions on a sandy area of California, the

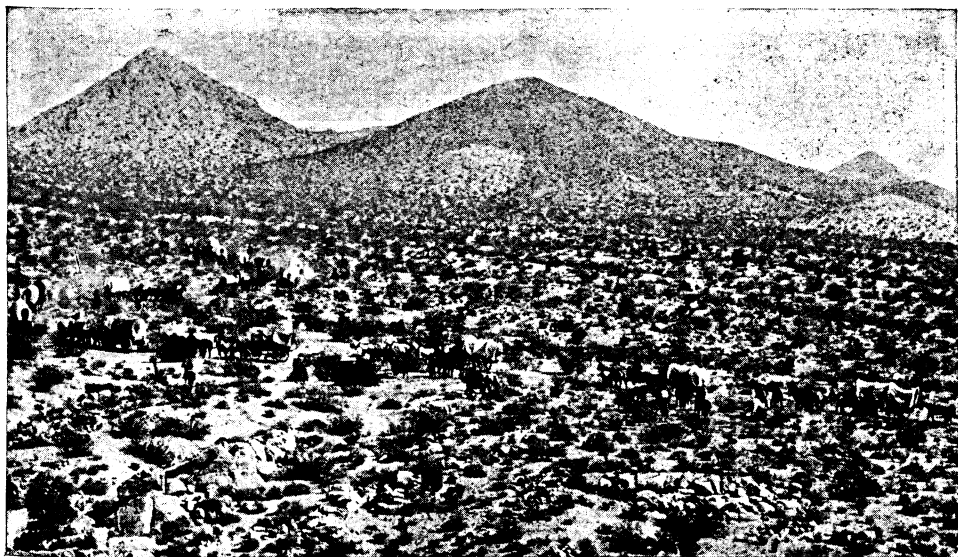


ARAB TRIBESMEN MOVING INTO POSITION FOR A SCENE IN THE PARAMOUNT PICTURE FROM E. M. HULL'S NOVEL "THE SHEIK"

camp for the workers in this picture was laid out in quite a military style. There were the stable lines for the horses, piles of hay and feed, huge mess tents for the men and women, pyramidal sleeping tents for the men, and tents for the women. Water was sent to the camp every day in large tanks mounted on motor trucks. At one end of the oasis was a canteen where soft drinks, confectionery, and cigarettes could be bought. Another tent was the camera dark-room. The post-office, highly primitive, consisted of two bags, outgoing and incoming, nailed to a tree.

The first sound of life in the camp was heard at six o'clock in the morning. A bugle sounded reveille, and all arose and dressed for breakfast. In a few minutes the camp was a beehive of activity: girls "making up" for their parts out in the sunshine; men shaving in front of trench mirrors tacked to tent poles. When the second bugle sounded there was a rush to the mess tents. It took two seatings to feed the big company.

Before and after "shooting" hours, when the camp streets were gay with brightly-dressed girls and dark Arab



TAKING MOTION PICTURES IN THE MOJAVE DESERT: WILLIAM S. HART'S WAGON TRAIN WENDING ITS WAY THROUGH SAGEBRUSH AND CACTUS TO PHOTOGRAPH SCENES FOR HART'S LATEST PARAMOUNT PICTURE "WHITE OAK."

horsemen, the scene resembled nothing as much as a colourful Oriental village.

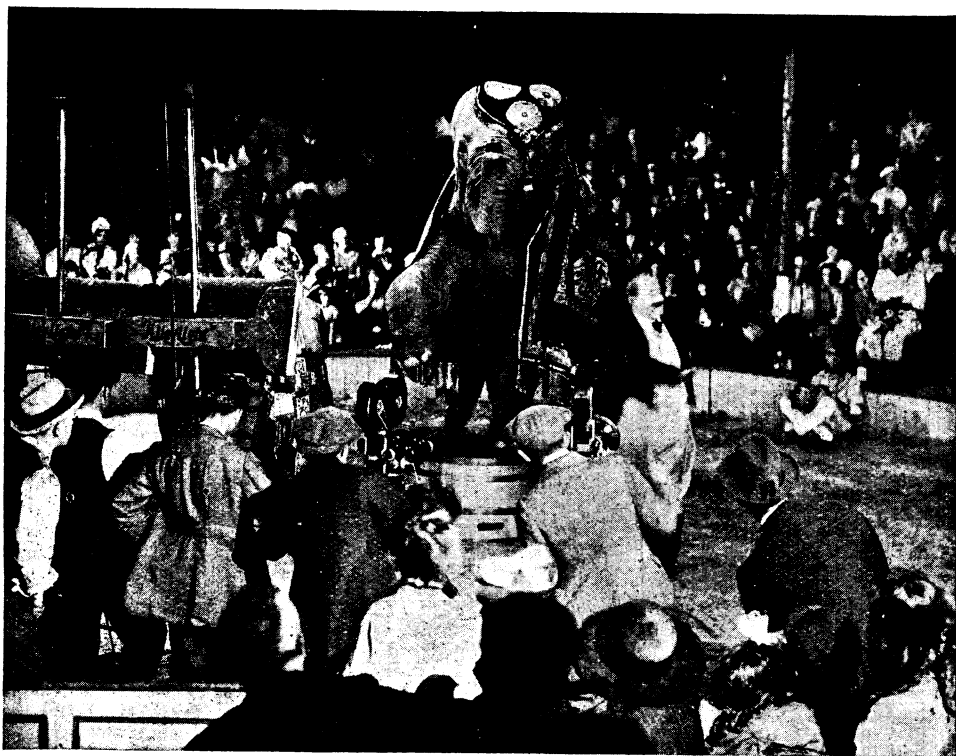
Everything went with clocklike regularity, and nothing was permitted to mar the routine. On the first day of work, for instance, it was discovered that the box stirrups made for the horsemen were too weak. So the technical director and the property-maker laboured all that night in a blacksmith's shop in a near-by village, hammering out new and better stirrups.

When a picture company visits a region in which a more civilised standard of living

nature of an asset in the motion picture profession.

For the filming of Dion Clayton Calthrop's romance "Perpetua," John S. Robertson, with his company, joined the Cirque Pinder in France for two weeks to make the necessary circus scenes. The picture people lived and boarded with the circus folks, following up the big tent outfit as it moved from place to place. The result is a really remarkable portrayal of French rural, as well as French circus, life.

Some very beautiful English locations also

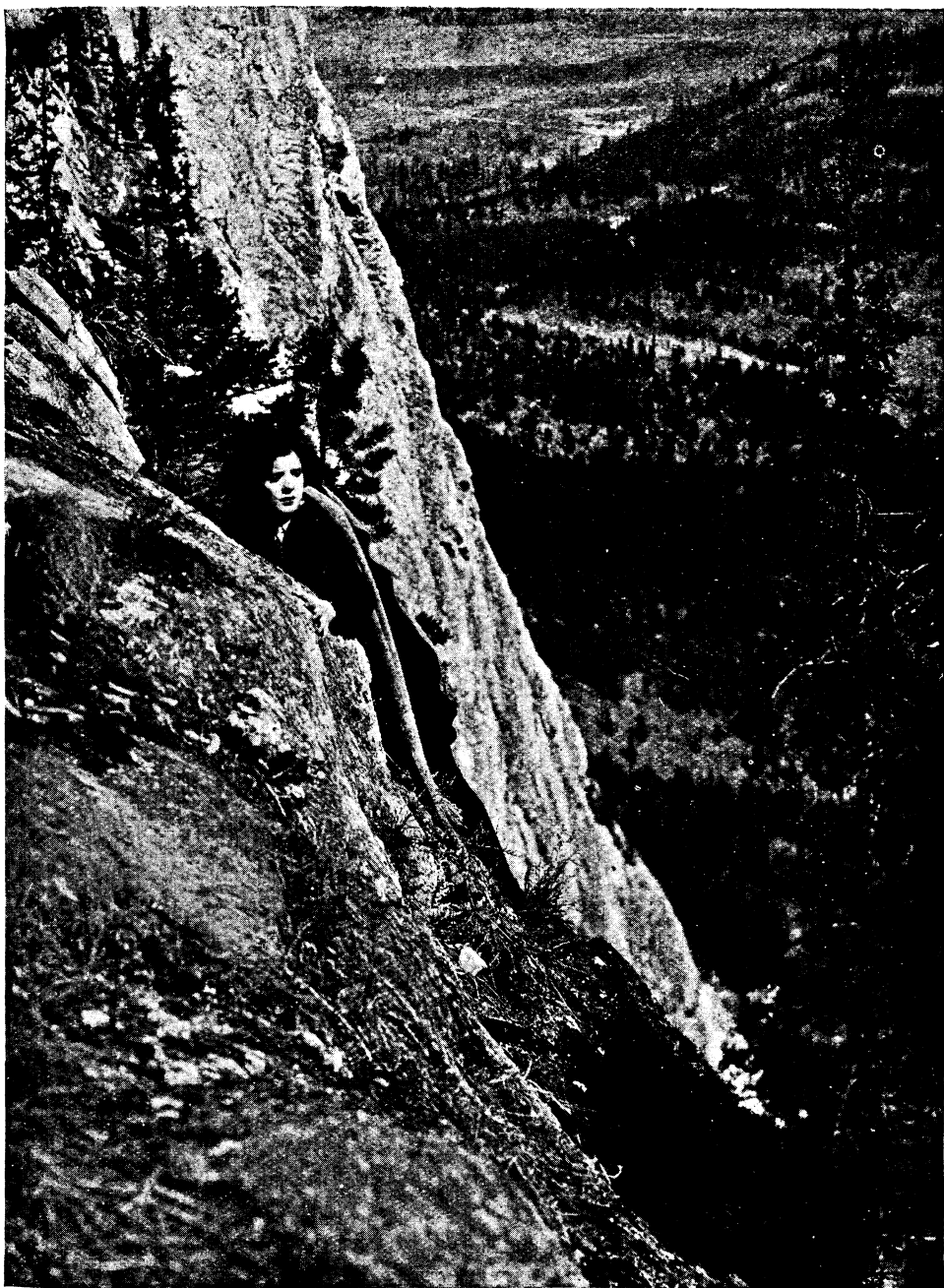


FILMING ONE OF THE CIRCUS INTERIORS FOR THE PARAMOUNT PICTURE OF DION CLAYTON CALTHROP'S "PERPETUA": ROY BYFORD AS THE CIRCUS PROPRIETOR, MONSIEUR LAMBALLE, INTRODUCING "MARIE-THERESE," THE MOST INTELLIGENT ELEPHANT IN THE WORLD.

can be reached, it is usual for a caterer, with or without his staff, to be in attendance, for the arranging of picnic meals at the scene of activity or prompt service at hotels, restaurants, and other "food centres." This was done when the Mexican scenes in "Her Husband's Trade Mark" were filmed, and the company's diet consisted of a mixture of the native fare—barbecued meat, Mexican beans, chile and tortillas—and imported lunches *al fresco*. This goes to show that a good digestion is in the

were secured for this picture, consisting chiefly of typical country houses and their grounds. Scenes were "shot" at "Greenlands," the show place of Henley-on-Thames, and at Beaulieu Abbey, an historic estate on the border of the New Forest.

Of all possible locations none so pleases a motion picture company as a private residence. Here they may live as in a first-class hotel and work amid exquisite surroundings. There exists in America an organisation known as the Film Mutual



THE SETTING FOR AN EXCITING MOMENT IN THE PARAMOUNT PICTURE
"THE VALLEY OF SILENT MEN."

Benefit Committee, which acts as a medium through which beautiful homes may be hired for the purposes of motion picture making. The payment made for these locations goes to two big charities. The idea should commend itself to some charity society over here, for the motion picture

companies are always ready enough to pay for needed locations.

Connected with every big picture studio is a man who keeps a card index of possible natural settings. It is his duty to find locations suited to the specific requirements of the company's producers,

either by expeditionary means or by reference to the carefully filed knowledge previously gained. This official location-finder must possess not only the explorative temperament, considerable geographical knowledge, and the imagination to visualise a required scene before setting out to find it, but he must have sufficient artistic sense to recognise the dramatic and photographic values of different aspects of Nature. A single error of judgment on his part may

For the producer, even with an infallible location-finder and the most expert and sporting camera-men, to say nothing of a hardy and long-enduring company, the making of distant exteriors is nearly always a trying experience, full of hazard and unforeseen circumstances. It not infrequently happens, too, that whilst away from the studio queries arise in reference to details of the story under production, and valuable hours of sunshine have to be



LIVING THE SIMPLE LIFE ON LOCATION: WALLACE REID AND THE PRINCIPALS OF HIS COMPANY COOKING LUNCH IN THE YOSEMITE VALLEY, WHERE THEY WENT FOR SCENES FOR THE PARAMOUNT PICTURE "THE WORLD'S CHAMPION."

result in an enormous wastage of time and money.

His responsibilities do not end here, however. In many instances he must possess complete knowledge of the fauna and flora of a neighbourhood; in others he must be supplied with historical details; in others, again, geological facts are required of him. He must advise the producer of any peculiarity of the place which may affect photography or the conditions of the cameramen, who, by the way, are often exposed to considerable risks during the making of exterior scenes.

wasted whilst the script is adapted to circumstances. In the making of "thrill" scenes, when the result of each piece of action is difficult to prophesy to a nicety, all kinds of alterations and adaptations have to be made from day to day, almost from hour to hour.

Sometimes certain scenes made in the studio before the location trip are found to be useless after the filming of the exteriors. When making "Her Husband's Trade Mark," for instance, the producer found it necessary to take the last of a sequence of scenes first. These scenes embraced a

horseback ride and a final jump of fifteen feet on horseback into the Rio Grande, Gloria Swanson being the rider.

The producer believed that if a woman rode swiftly for miles over rough country, and finally made a flying leap into the river, her hair would not only get wet, but would come unpinned. So he advised Miss Swanson to make up in this way for the scene following her plunge. Then the company went on location and photographed the scenes up to and including the plunge itself. To the astonishment of all, the actress's hair was not wet, nor was it unloosened. Save for a few stray ends, her coiffure gave no indication that she had taken the wild ride or gone into the water.

The producer decided to make the ending over again; but he is still wondering whether it is better to portray the surprising truth or the more apparently probable in such a case.

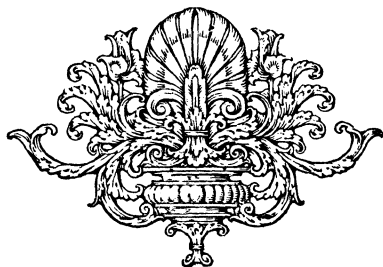
There was a time not long ago when the impressionistic seemed likely to supersede the realistic in motion picture settings. Producers, aiming at simplicity, became enamoured of the more neutral kinds of painted scenery, which, they argued, threw into relief the human forms photographed

against them. In the last analysis, however, there is no simplicity like Nature's own, and even in her most ornate moods she never detracts from, but rather lends colour to, the drama of humanity.

Evidently the impressionistic phase is over, for there is a back-to-the-land movement all through the motion picture profession, the result of which is that the film's one great asset over the legitimate stage is now being exploited in a manner equal to its importance. There is no doubt that to people of all classes and types Nature, beautifully interpreted, has an appeal as eternally fresh as the face of Nature herself.

The fascination of such a picture as the Shackleton film "*Southward on the Quest*," which provides extreme examples of unique locations, is to be found as much in its scenic charm as in its historical interest; its popularity should open the eyes of those producers who still cling to the belief that the public's recognition of beauty is restricted to the bizarre in costume and the luxuriously ornate in soft furnishings.

The scenes here given as illustrations are reproduced by the kind permission of "Paramount Pictures."



RELIEF.

THANK God for trees! Not for their outward grace,
 Nor for the way they lace
 Their boughs upon the morn and evening skies;
 But for this inmost grace—
 They do not criticise!
 They take me as I am and let me be!
 Could aught be sweeter than such charity?

LETITIA WITHALL.



GOLDEN GRAIN

A BARQUE put into London
And fastened to the quay.
She brought no iron cargo,
No harvest of the sea,
But golden grain from many a wain
Within her hold had she.

And men with sacks behind them,
And bended heads before,
Ran from the barque unloading,
And back again once more,
And dropped their sacks from aching backs
In rows upon the floor.

And birds dropped down from nowhere
Upon the full quayside,
And sang unto the sailors:
" 'Tis grain, 'tis grain you hide!
Now feed us all that fair befall
When you shall sail the tide! "

From every sack they fed them.
Now when their spirits fail,
The sailors dream of cherubs
That guard them from the gale,
The sound of wings and feathered things
That sing along the sail.

WILFRID THORLEY



"A voice spoke from the foot of the tree."

UP A TREE

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

THERE is such a thing as the impossible. Terry Rand, down and out, made the discovery on that particularly lovely April morning when it was borne in on him that he hadn't a bean, or a job, and that, to obtain either, Coquette must be sold—Coquette, undefeated fencer over the stiffest line you could give her; Coquette, pal of lonely hours and joyous ones; Coquette, who couldn't be fed and stabled on a D.S.O. and the remainder of a set of Chippendale chairs, which was all that just then accrued to Terry.

The chairs were the last of the Rand heirlooms. Nevertheless, Terry sold them first, to the wife of a wealthy man who had been enabled, by the community's eternal need of sugar, to take "a little place in the country."

Two months later Terry sold Coquette, and felt that life was blank indeed. He had heard of a job, a somewhat vague and undefined prospect somewhere abroad, but

this would not be available, he learnt, until the autumn, and the immediate problem was the necessity of getting through the summer.

It was at this point in his fortunes that Fate presented Mr. Robert St. Quentin. Mr. Robert St. Quentin had heard of Terry Rand through a mutual acquaintance, and had immediately conceived what he considered an excellent proposition. As, no doubt, Captain Rand was aware, he was engaged on a really engrossing piece of work—a monograph on the rarer finches of Great Britain. He had an excellent *milieu* for his observations—a house surrounded by the most bird-haunted garden and woods imaginable, perfect seclusion and perfect quiet; but—he shook his head regretfully—there was one drawback: the particular bird in which he was interested had a partiality for thick and tall trees, and he—Mr. Robert St. Quentin—was neither so young nor so agile as he used to be. In short,

what he required was an assistant who could climb trees and, concealed amid the leaves, take notes on the ways of the feathered inhabitants thereof.

"My niece volunteered," Mr. Robert St. Quentin explained solemnly, "but, apart from the fact that I do not think she would possess sufficient patience for the work, I do not approve of young women behaving like boys. So, in short, I think our meeting extremely lucky."

From which Terry Rand gathered that the post of tree-climber was being offered to him. Dazedly he heard Mr. St. Quentin stating a salary that sounded fantastic. If he accepted, Captain Rand was to report at Friar's Court to-morrow and to take over his duties immediately. Concerning the duration of the arrangement, that must be uncertain; it depended, apparently, on the whims of the rarer finches of Great Britain. A month—six weeks—possibly more. If the birds nested. . .

"You can handle a camera, I suppose? Yes? That is satisfactory. Of course"—he looked at Terry wistfully—"I suppose I could not hope to find anyone quite as enthusiastic as myself, but I am sure you will find the study most intriguing, most fascinating, and I shall be very much in your debt."

Terry smiled his own particularly engaging smile and refrained from endorsing the conviction. If he had his private opinions on the fascination of cramp endured in the cause of reporting on the domestic arrangements of the rarer finches of Great Britain, he did not advance his views. Of course, the whole thing was absurd. Still—

He heard Mr. Robert St. Quentin instructing him to "think it over." So he thought it over, and, being a young man of decision, accomplished the feat while in the act of accepting Mr. St. Quentin's proffered hand.

"I'll come," he said briefly. "And thank you. Don't know much about birds, you know, but I'll do my best for you."

He was a kindly young man, and he thought the huge relief on his prospective employer's countenance almost pathetic. Mr. St. Quentin wrung his hand and assured him that a load was off his mind.

"I was beginning to fear I should never find assistance," he said. "I offered the post to a man who came to the house seeking employment. He said he had walked from Bristol. But he—he did not seem to care to undertake it. He said he suffered from

lumbago. In fact, he was quite rude about it. I was glad Shelagh was not at home. And then I tried a boy from the village. But he frightened the birds away, and broke the branches, and in the end fell out of the tree, and his mother came to see me, and said if he had broken his leg she would have had the law of me. He didn't, of course, but I had to give her ten shillings. So you can understand the relief. And if you can possibly start to-morrow—"

So it came about that on the following afternoon Terry Rand was cheerfully tramping the five West Country miles that lay between Friar's Court and the nearest station. He was tramping them for the simple reason that, being down and out, it was the only method of getting there that he could afford. The first two miles were chiefly notable for the pervasive quality of the dust, the ensuing three were a joyous pilgrimage of forest and common, golden sun and brown shade, whortleberry and heather already purple-pink. And birds! Birds enough, thought Terry, to provide him with occupation for the rest of his life.

Then came the red-brown roofs of the St. Quentin house, an enthusiastic host and employer greeting him with the news that the finches were in the cedar tree, a demure hostess in clover-pink linen. She gave him tea in a room all cool and fragrant with bowls of spice pinks. Did he take sugar? And did he know a great deal about birds? Her eyes were violet-grey, and her name was Shelagh. Terry Rand concentrated his faculties with an effort and answered both questions in the negative. In the pause that followed he was aware that the violet-grey eyes accorded him a long, measuring glance, also that their verdict was not instantly in his favour. Miss St. Quentin went on to talk of other things—tea-cake, the weather, the village cricket matches, and the miraculous bowling of a Mr. Ronald Maddison, who was, Terry gathered, a lieutenant in His Majesty's Navy, at present sojourning at the Rectory. Somehow Terry felt him to be rather unnecessary to the scheme of things.

After tea Mr. Robert St. Quentin initiated him into his duties, provided him with a bulky notebook, and introduced him to those rarer finches of Great Britain that had condescended to dwell at Friar's Court. Terry Rand understood that he was to conceal himself in the topmost branches of the copper beech before dawn on the following morning. The finches were

apparently of divided mind on the respective merits of the cedar and the copper beech as sites for a dwelling.

The copper beech was a wonderful tree, just then in the freshest beauty of its red-brown leaf. Terry Rand, admiring the splendour of it in the June sunlight, did not at once connect it with that which his employer was proudly displaying for his approval—a strange and prehistoric garment of red-brown canvas and a stick of brown stain reminiscent of amateur theatrical make-up.

"With this on, and your face stained to harmonise," Mr. St. Quentin stated triumphantly, "there will be absolutely nothing to frighten the birds. I may say they are very shy and wary in their habits, but with this——" He spread out the weird garment proudly, and Terry realised that it represented the livery of his hire.

"I have a similar one in green," the enthusiastic voice pursued, "but we will try this first, as the birds seem chiefly to haunt the beech. I beg your pardon?"

Terry became aware that he had spoken aloud the prayer that they might continue to do so. Somehow he had a really unreasonable acute aversion to appearing before the clear, lovely, and inexplicably scornful gaze of Miss Shelagh St. Quentin with a green face. He hastened to amend his involuntary remark with the assurance that it was a splendid idea.

And in the grey shadows of three o'clock of the following morning he stole forth from the house, camouflaged according to instruction, and climbed upwards into the copper beech.

At three-fifteen there was a sharp thunder shower; at four a cuckoo came and cuckooed three feet from his left ear; at four-thirty his right foot went to sleep; at five he reflected bitterly on that undeniable scorn in Miss Shelagh's eyes whenever they rested on him; at five-thirty his left foot followed its fellow's example; at six he speculated sadly on the St. Quintins' breakfast hour.

At six-thirty a bird similar to Mr. St. Quentin's description of the finch perched on a branch close by, ruffled its feathers, wiped its beak on the wood, twittered, and turned a bright eye in the direction of Terry Rand.

He held his breath. The bird evidently credited him with the power of holding it for ever. It was a three-cornered duel. When Terry choked, the bird departed in a hurry.

At eight-fifteen a voice spoke from the foot of the tree—a manly voice that hailed him blithely, and bade him descend. Obeying stiffly, he confronted a good-looking young man in creased and creamy flannels, who surveyed him with undisguised merriment, and informed him, as the emissary of their host and hostess, breakfast was ready. A moment later Miss Shelagh had joined them, fresh and radiant, with a rose in her frock and a dancing light in her eyes. She introduced Captain Rand and Mr. Maddison.

Terry, removing the ridiculous canvas camouflage, reflected sourly that that was the blighter of whose miraculous bowling Miss St. Quentin had been enthusiastic. It seemed, moreover, that Mr. Maddison was a fisherman of no mean skill, for trout of his landing that morning graced the breakfast table.

Terry Rand didn't enjoy them. He was conscious of a primitive, cave-man desire to go forth with a gun or a knife, or even a bow and arrow, and bring back the results of his prowess, and prove that he, too, excelled. Such prehistoric instinct can five hours in a tree awaken in a civilised twentieth-century being.

His mood was not soothed by Maddison's cheery inquiry as to whether he'd done a lot of this sort of thing.

"Not a scientific Johnny myself. Don't know more about birds than most people. Used to go birds'-nestin' an' all that, of course. And like to hear the little beggars sing. That thrush, now—hark at it!" He turned to Shelagh, and she flashed him a laughing glance.

"It happens to be a blackbird. I love birds, too, without particularly wanting to know how many feathers they've got in their tails, so long as they're happy. I think they are—in this garden. Sugar, Captain Rand? I forget——"

* * * * *

The finches were cautious of decision and hard to please. Two days later they forsook the copper beech and haunted the leafy branches of an oak at the edge of the shrubbery. Terry Rand wore light-green canvas and ascended thither with a notebook wherein all the pages were fair and blank but two. On one of these was recorded the fact that the finch had been seen with a feather in its beak. Mr. St. Quentin, counselling patience, was yet palpably disappointed; Ronald Maddison was absurdly facetious; Shelagh advanced no opinions at all.

Ten days went by. Then the incredible happened. Terry Rand requested another notebook. It seemed that another bird had appeared on the scene, a bird sufficiently akin to the first to be a finch, but sufficiently different to establish the enthralling fact that it was a rare finch indeed; Terry's description would compare with no known bird ever seen in the British Isles.

But if his employer was delighted, Terry himself, it appeared, did not share his satisfaction, but remained plunged in gloom. The gloom did not lighten when, sallying forth one glorious June afternoon, he encountered Miss Shelagh, also sallying forth, all in cream linen and a wide straw hat with a ribbon of cunning amber colour, to watch Mr. Ronald Maddison play in a local cricket match.

Mr. Ronald Maddison, it appeared, had been compelled to precede her, for which you may or may not blame the exactly right angle of the straw hat, which could surely not have been arrived at in a hurry.

Terry Rand debated on none of these things. He was a simple soul, and he found the fact that he was escorting Shelagh down the wood-path all-sufficient. They had crossed a paddock wherein were two or three young horses, half friendly and inquisitive, after the manner of their kind. Terry did not know by what precise conversational road he reached the point of confiding in her on the subject of Coquette. He found her delightfully responsive, until she said suddenly—

"And you sold her? How could you?"

"Had to," said Terry Rand curtly. It had meant enough to him to edge his voice. Shelagh turned and looked at him with undisguised scorn in her clear eyes.

"The line of least resistance," she said quietly. "Thanks, I won't trouble you to come any further."

Terry Rand was left staring after her down the gold and brown of the pinewood path.

* * * * *

So matters continued for two days more, at the end of which time Mr. Ronald Maddison was to return to his ship. On the evening of the second day he came to say good-bye.

He found Miss St. Quentin in the garden, seated on the lowest bough of the copper beech, and there, in the space of fifteen minutes, he took leave of her with a frank cheeriness that certainly left no doubts at all as to the unimpaired soundness of his

heart. You might have heard him whistling as he swung down the drive.

But his departure left the girl seated, very still and pensive, on the copper beech bough. The westering sun, flickering through the leaves on her uncovered head, found it bent. Once, I think, she sighed.

But there are limits to human endurance as well as to that of trees, and at that opportune moment the branch on to which Terry Rand, in his indignation, had unconsciously shifted his weight, gave up the attempt to support it, and, like the arrow in the song, he fell to earth.

In the circumstances, Shelagh's fortitude was admirable. Her exclamation, as Terry got to his feet and confronted her, held more of indignation than alarm. She, too, had risen, and stood there, a pink flush in her small face, a handkerchief clutched defensively in one hand. She demanded fiercely what he meant by not announcing his presence before—if he thought it honourable to play the part of spy and eavesdropper—if he thought—

For a man who has just fallen fifteen feet out of a tree Terry Rand assumed command of the situation with admirable promptitude. "There's only one thing that counts," he told her quietly, "and that's that you're unhappy." He paused. "As for any other consideration, if it's any consolation to you to know, I'm going to-morrow."

"Oh!" For an instant an odd dismay was added to her anger. There was a moment's silence before he gave her the explanation she would not ask.

"You see, I couldn't carry on any longer with my job."

"But—but the birds—the new finch—Uncle Robert—" She heard her own voice, hurried and breathless.

Terry Rand looked at her grimly, then pointed at a small brown bird perched on a neighbouring bush.

"That," he told her, "is the new finch."

She followed his glance.

"That? But that's a hedge-sparrow! Everyone knows—"

"Exactly," said Terry Rand.

She stared at him. It was, perhaps, the first time that her grey eyes held no hint of that scorn with which they were wont to regard his square, brown, and by no means altogether unpleasing countenance. The scorn, it seemed, was crowded out by other emotions—a half-incredulous, dawning realisation of the truth.

"You mean—you invented it all? That all the time you were deceiving—Uncle Robert? How dared you!"

He reddened, but faced her squarely.

"I know it wasn't—playing the game.

"Had to?"

"Had to. Else I couldn't have stayed——"

"Oh!" The scorn came back now in a flash. "I understand! Rather than lose



"Terry Rand and Miss St. Quentin were still seated on the lowest bough."

But I—you see, I was pretty desperate. I hadn't been here a week before the first finches cleared out—resented my interest, I suppose. Anyway, they never came back. So I had to invent a new kind!

a job like this—a ridiculously easy job that isn't a man's job at all—you'd keep it under false pretences!"

There was a queer little silence, broken only by the gay roundelay from the little

brown bird in the lilac bush. Terry Rand said very quietly: "It wasn't the—job that made me want to stay. I—hated that. Besides"—he groped in his pocket for an envelope—"I'll have a real job soon. Read that."

The letter he gave her, dated four days previously, stated briefly that Terry Rand's unwearying persistence was at last rewarded. The nebulous prospect of something somewhere abroad, in the autumn, had taken definite shape in British East Africa at a definite salary. The writer wished Terry Rand all luck, and again alluded to his persistence.

"And I thought," said Shelagh, "I thought all the time that you were just slacking, and content to slack. I thought you'd just—let go. It—it made me awfully unhappy!"

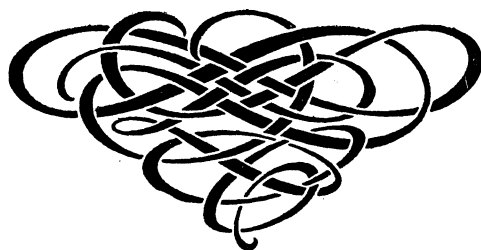
"Shelagh!"

She drew a long breath and handed the letter back. The sun came through the copper beech branches in a glow of gold.

By the time it had dipped behind the little hill and left the great tree a tent of delicate shadows against a clear lilac sky, Terry Rand and Miss St. Quentin were still seated on the lowest bough, discussing British East Africa in the first person plural, future tense. . . .

Above their heads a small bird slipped from branch to branch with a plaintive call that was presently answered by a second small bird carrying a wisp of thistledown in its beak.

They were two of the rarer finches of Great Britain, returned with the unerring instinct that henceforward their affairs would be nobody's business but their own.



IF.

IF you had lingered at the glass,
Pinning your violets dewy-wet,
That moment when I chanced to pass,
We had not met!

If you had wandered by, nor stood
Awhile to watch the creeping mist
Enwreath the silent, yellowing wood,
We had not kiss'd!

If you had gone, nor mutely glanced
With laughing eyes to meet my own—
Ah, what a world of love entranced
We had not known!

DOROTHY ROGERS.

SOME ACHIEVE GREATNESS

By DOUGLAS REEKIE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

MERVYN HILLIER usually delayed the opening of his letters until he was drinking his second cup of coffee. By then he felt satisfied, complacent, and if anyone had seized that moment to ask him whether he was a success he would not have understood the question. He would have looked round the room, his eyebrows might have been raised slightly as though to say, "I can afford to live in Hampstead, and surely the appointments of my house are sufficient criterion," he would have mumbled, and not waited for the question to be repeated. He was content with himself. He had adopted the habit of living by routine, and routine does not allow anybody to query his work; yet, going through his letters one morning, he paused for a moment to wonder whether he was a success.

It was one of his friends—friends that were all part of his methodical habits, and whom he knew he would meet in certain places at certain periods of the year—who made him pause. She wrote:

"... It's Muriel's birthday to-morrow, you know. I was getting her a writing-case when I saw a notice of your exhibition in a window. There was quite a crowd there. But what are you painting pictures like that for? They all seemed well done, but they're not like your usual things, not so good. There was too much blue about. The people seemed to like them. . . ."

He was amused. Ridiculous, making a mistake like that, he thought. "Saw the name, I suppose. Didn't trouble to read any further." He turned to his paper. "Geoffrey Hillier Exhibition," he read. The "Geoffrey" was in small type. He spoke across the breakfast table

"How's the exhibition going?"

"All right, dad."

He turned over the pages of the paper and spoke again.

"Um! They say 'the remarkable pictures of Geoffrey Hillier.' I suppose you're a success now. Here's a letter meant for you."

Several times during the day Mervyn found himself wondering whether Geoffrey was a success. He could not always understand the boy's pictures, his choice of subjects; they were widely different from his own. When he was twenty-four he had painted a picture of two fields—a well-proportioned tree reared itself against serried rows of clouds, there was a hedge and a broken five-barred gate. The picture was sold for a respectable sum, and he painted two more. These were also sold, and he called it success; he began to say that he was a master of technique. He still painted pictures of fields. The pictures were all green, a dull sort of green. He wondered whether he would still be called successful.

"Remarkably good pictures," the paper said. He had dropped right out of the papers lately. Some of his early work had been commented on. "Promising" had been the occasional verdict of a critic. Had he fulfilled the promise? He looked round the room. He sold his pictures. Yes, he would go and see the exhibition.

* * * * *

Regularly he read the evening paper before dressing for dinner—that is to say, he glanced at the political news, scanned the headlines of the crime, and read the diary or occasionally an article. He found a paragraph about the exhibition that night.

"The successful exhibition," it said. "It is not so much the technical accuracy that appeals—in fact, I noticed several blemishes—but it is the impression of freedom that one carries away. Geoffrey Hillier is only twenty-four, yet one can safely assert that he is nearing the top of his profession. He is naturally of the modern school, but that does not mean that his

work is at all bizarre. He is well-balanced and near to being a genius. It is not generally known, but his father also paints."

"It is not generally known . . . nearing the top . . ." Those two phrases irritated Mervyn. He tried to think about the exhibition. The man was right. There was something in the pictures that appealed, yet there were mistakes. He had seen them at once. "Mistakes! How was the boy called successful?" He looked at the paper again, and thoughts flashed quicker through his head.

"It is not generally known . . ." No, he could not create a picture like the boy. He could draw, yes, photograph something, but give life to a shadow. . . . He knew beauty, he could copy, but not conceive. The boy could—why, he was already successful! Why wasn't he?

They had both had the same opportunities. Was the boy clever? Why should he be? He's young yet; not married, no need to sell his pictures for food. "I might have been successful. I married too young. That was it." He turned to the paper again. "What was I saying? Marriage spoilt my chance? Nonsense! But there's the boy—had to work for him, and now he's a success. I'm not."

Mervyn was not in the habit of analysing either his thoughts or his actions—they followed one another automatically; some unaccounted force of gravitation kept him running smoothly in his groove. He was disturbed, yet by morning he had forgotten. He would have paid no more attention to his discovery that he was not a success if it had not been that he found Geoffrey in the studio.

Whenever the boy was at home he was allowed to use the studio, but that particular morning, when Mervyn came through the door and discovered Geoffrey intently working, he felt a slight sense of irritation. He looked from the boy to where his own easel stood; he fancied the light was not so good in his corner, and he remembered the paragraph in the paper, "It is not generally known . . ." "Of course not," he added, and showed his irritation.

"Move out of the way a little," he said.

"Right. Half a minute."

"No, now."

From the bent and almost crumpled attitude in which he stood, Geoffrey straightened himself out. He half turned and took the handle of a brush from between his teeth. He smiled as he spoke, his fore-

head crinkled slightly as his eyes opened a little wider.

"What's the matter, dad?" he asked.

"Matter?" repeated Mervyn, and hesitated a second. When he spoke, all the habit of his life was in his reply. His irritation had left him, not by reason of Geoffrey's smile or the tone of his voice—he had stagnated so long he could not feel any emotion. "The light's not quite good enough," he said almost plaintively.

Geoffrey looked across the room, started to speak, but changed his mind and moved across the studio. Half-way he looked at his father's easel again and stopped.

"What's the matter?" he said. "You're in the same position as usual." But Mervyn had again lost all interest.

"It might be better," he mumbled.

Mervyn had never shown much interest in Geoffrey's work. At first he had been able to help, point out the faults of the boy's craftsmanship, but even in those days he had never been able to visualise the ideas, the beauty that Geoffrey conceived, and as Geoffrey became more proficient, he contented himself with an occasional glance at the pictures he finished or at the work in progress.

The canvas on which he found Geoffrey so intently working that morning was different. It fascinated him. Several times during the days that followed he found that he had paused in his work and was watching Geoffrey. Once he saw him frowning in front of his canvas, jabbing tobacco into his pipe with a furious sort of movement. He caught himself nearly smiling then, and turned back to his work. He made a dab with his brush and, though not knowing the reason or pausing to think, felt curiously disturbed. When he looked up again, nearly an hour later, it was to find Geoffrey still frowning and biting hard on his pipe.

He laid down his brush and walked across the studio. Geoffrey did not see him come, and, despite his frown, seemed lost in a dreamy contemplation of his work. Mervyn still felt vaguely uneasy, and it made him want to speak quietly.

"Has it gone wrong?" he asked. "Come to a stop, my boy?"

Geoffrey did not hear, did not know his father stood behind him, and his silence gave to that uneasy feeling a sense of antagonism. Mervyn went back to his work, and though outwardly he was as complacent as usual, thoughts—queer because they were eager for expression,

though habit was against all hurry—were chasing through his head.

"He's successful," they said testily. "He doesn't want my help any longer. I can't do so well as he now."

Several times after that, Geoffrey, looking up from his work, saw his father watching him across the studio. There seemed to be a peculiar twist to his lips—it was hardly noticeable, as though he wanted to smile derisively, but did not dare.

It worried Geoffrey, that smile. He was worried about his work, too, and he began to watch for the smile. Each time he looked up it seemed to be more pronounced. He had a commission for the picture, but though he knew his conception of something wonderful was good, his execution seemed weak. He discovered that just when he most required it, his technique was not perfect. He had tackled something too big. He lacked experience, and he wanted to talk to his father about it, but that expression somehow kept him from seeking advice. A barrier had arisen between them that neither had wished to build, but which neither realised could be toppled over.

In the house, whenever they met away from the studio, they were outwardly the same as they had always been. Geoffrey had never really understood his father. When his mother died he had to fend for himself, and had never realised that his father needed sympathy.

It was then that Mervyn had formed his habits of regularity. He had married when he was twenty-four, more because he felt he ought to than for any great love or even passion. His wife had cared for him, lavished all the affection she was capable of upon him, and shown it in innumerable ways of providing for his comfort. She had given him a son—they had considered it only natural that they should have a child. When she died, habit took her place. He did things day after day in the same order, and he forgot his son. When Geoffrey first thought seriously of painting as a profession, they came a little closer together. Mervyn became his tutor, and taught him how to use his tools, but he forgot to ask why Geoffrey wanted to paint. He had stagnated for so long that his habits had killed his imagination. He had become a painter of still-life landscapes. Everything he did was mathematically correct; proportion was all he ever attempted to achieve, and he forgot that Nature is purposely disproportionate, with the result that when

Geoffrey became technically proficient, he did not understand his son's work. Each began to wonder what the other was trying to achieve. It worried Mervyn for a time, but it was too big for him to cope with; it was outside the circle of his thoughts, and in time he forgot to think about it. They drifted apart again, and though, when they met outside the studio, they talked—never about painting—and acted as father and son, at work they were almost complete strangers.

That derisive smile began to have its effect on Geoffrey's work. Success had come easily to him, and he had rarely met scepticism where his work was concerned. It was unlike his father, too. He could not understand, yet unconsciously it annoyed. As the days went by, and he could not find a way out of his difficulties that gave him complete satisfaction, he developed a habit of suddenly leaving his work and going out of the studio, the house, anywhere to get away from what he was coming to regard as his failure.

He went for walks across the Heath—nearly deserted in the morning—but ringed round with houses as it was, he never seemed able to get away from the consciousness of his thoughts. Just when he seemed to be stepping out of the immediate world, the world of houses and people who were all wrapped up in their doings, and to be reaching some place where it was possible to do exactly as you wished and to achieve what you desired, just when he was recovering his old confidence in himself, he would cross a path and come up against the fence round somebody's garden, or see a motorcycle tear along a road a few yards in front of him. He turned back then as dispirited as when he set out, yet more determined to make his picture a success.

Once when he came back from a walk he found his father standing in front of his picture. He opened the studio door and flung his hat on a chair before he noticed the figure by the easel. The derisive smile had gone, and in its place there was a look almost of pity. The mouth was drawn a little, and Geoffrey wondered whether his father was not at last getting too old for work, tired; but the next minute he remembered his father's life, that there had never been any great decisions or excitements in it, that his father had no right to look worn out. He saw only the pity, and took it to be for his picture. He resented it. He saw that his father failed to understand

what he had conceived, but that he knew he was going wrong, that his execution had failed. He forgot that the pity might be because of his father's love, and he took a step forward. He would speak, show his father he did not want pity. Mervyn heard him move and turned. The light died out of his eyes, his lips took on that odd twist again, there was a vague smile as Geoffrey spoke.

"What's wrong with it, dad?" He had meant to show his resentment, to tell his father he could do without help, that he was capable of painting the most wonderful picture in the world, but as his father turned he had seemed old, too old for anything but comfort. He wanted looking after, and all Geoffrey could say was: "What's wrong with it, dad?"

Mervyn turned back to look at the picture again. The opportunity for which he had waited had come, but he seemed unable to make use of it. "The boy's a success," he thought. "Everybody said so, but he wants my help. Those papers flattered him. They wanted to set him a standard, to give him something to equal, to better." He looked at the half-finished picture. "Yes, he's wrong there. He's going the wrong way about it. I can put him right. He's a success, but he wants my help." And suddenly he remembered a phrase from that paper: "It is not generally known . . ." He turned to Geoffrey.

"You're all right," he said. "Finish it off as you intend." And as he stopped speaking, Geoffrey, for the first time, understood. He saw that his father was jealous of his success. He wanted to put his arm round his father's shoulders, to laugh, but it was too late. Mervyn had turned away, and a wall seemed to suddenly build itself inside the studio, to divide it in two. Geoffrey understood, but they were farther apart than ever.

* * * * *

Geoffrey worked feverishly in his hurry to finish the picture. He scrapped the canvas and began again, and in his eagerness to finish without his father's help, the picture seemed to go better the second time. When it was nearly completed, there was a return of his doubts as to its success, but he forced himself to work on until, as he laid down his brush for the last time, he said it was good. He convinced himself it was good. He saw his father looking across the studio and, forgetting the jealousy, he magnified the twist of the mouth until it was a patronising sneer. He was young, the

patronage coloured his judgment, and when the people for whom he had painted the picture wanted to know when it would be ready, he wrote to say it was finished, that it was better than he had expected.

They said they would come to see, and he was content. He was satisfied artificially with an artificiality, and Mervyn, pausing before the easel as he left the studio that day, smiled again.

He often remembered that phrase "It is not generally known . . ." and as much as his imagination would allow, he visualised what would happen when the picture was on view. He could see the smirks, the surprise on the face of the purchasers. He wondered whether they would conclude their bargain. Would Geoffrey still be a success? Beyond that he did not go. He began to doubt then, and think about the motive that was making him so eager to see the boy fail. It became too big for him, and he dismissed it from his mind.

Geoffrey did not come in to dinner that night, and for the first time for years Mervyn felt lonely. There was that picture out there in the studio. He wanted to forget it. He tried to read, but his imagination, deadened since the death of his wife, began to play him tricks. That phrase ceased to have the significance that constant reiteration had given it. He had to search for other arguments, to tell himself that his son was a success and that he was not—that he had never had a chance, had married too soon, his hands had been tied. There was the boy—the boy that had meant anchoring him down to one mode of life. It had meant making sure of an income, and there had been no opportunity for experiment. And then the boy had refused his help, had shown that he was independent just when—when he should have been doing things for his father . . . duty . . . Habit reasserted itself. He wrote two letters, looked at the paper again, went to bed. He was half asleep when he heard a door close. Someone came up the stairs and walked past the room. There was something he wanted to tell Geoffrey. He couldn't remember. "About some colour," he muttered, half asleep. The boy had asked—what was it? "Geoffrey!" He called out the name drowsily, but there was no answer, and he dropped off to sleep.

Geoffrey was sitting in front of his picture when Mervyn went to the studio in the morning. He had a cigarette in his mouth and was puffing clouds of smoke into the air. He looked up as Mervyn entered.

Somehow his father seemed older than usual. There was a suggestion of lines round the eyes; his cuff was slightly frayed. He had always appeared as unalterable as a porcelain figure, but now he was changing. He was getting old. His clothes hung more loosely. Geoffrey again felt a great wave of sympathy for him. He wanted to tell him that he understood his jealousy, to laugh at him, with him, but what could he say? He felt absurdly young, like when he used to come home from school and find his father working. As then,

it was. He hadn't noticed the time. He blundered on.

"They're coming to see it to-day."



"He fell to the floor, and the easel came on top of him."

he blurted out the first thing that came to his head.

"Is breakfast ready?" he asked, and immediately felt uncomfortable. Of course

"Who's coming?"

"The picture. The people who gave me the commission. About lunch-time. Can they stay to lunch?"

Mervyn looked at the picture before replying. "Yes, if you want them to," he said, but Geoffrey had not waited. He did not notice the almost indefinable tone of contempt in the voice.

It was more than an hour before Mervyn stopped working. After a time he discovered that something was trying to force him to turn and look at that picture in Geoffrey's part of the studio. He did not want to. If he worked, he could not look, and he kept on moving about, picking up this thing there, laying it down again, painting mechanically. He could not look at the picture again. There were mistakes. He had seen them all. The men would see them. It would do Geoffrey good, hurt his pride, he thought. He would help the boy then. The mistakes weren't so very bad. They could easily be put right. Lack of experience. They would be noticed, though. People would laugh. He tried to forget his thoughts in his work. He had never been troubled by his imagination before. Work had always been sufficient. His brush moved mechanically again.

He moved to open the window. It was close in the studio. He was listless. He sat down for a moment. Something was wrong. He had better give it up for the day, get out in the fresh air.

There were those people coming. Geoffrey would like him to be out of the way. Perhaps they would not notice the mistakes. They might not know enough. "They'll want to tell me he is successful—that I must be proud of him." He stood up then and started to work again, but it was only for a moment: The thoughts came crowding back.

"They may not know enough to see the faults. They'll take the picture away and hang it somewhere. Somebody's bound to

find out then. No, no, they mustn't—they mustn't laugh at the boy!" he called out. He dropped his brush and turned towards the door. He must get away quickly. He couldn't face those smirks. But there was the picture. They mustn't see it.

He looked round wildly and moved a few paces. What could he do? He stumbled. He felt giddy. The heat, he thought, and moved more quickly. The door opened, and he heard Geoffrey's voice. He must be quick. Get to the picture somehow, do something—hide it.

He took another step and caught his foot in the cover of a chair. He had no idea of what he intended to do. He wanted to call out, to stop them coming through the door. He would never reach the picture in time. They must not see it. And to steady himself, as he tripped he flung out his arm. His hand touched the picture, and he clutched tight hold. It gave way before his weight. There was a crash and a tearing of canvas. He fell to the floor, and the easel came on top of him, but the picture, ripped almost from corner to corner and unrecognisable, remained caught on a sharp iron hook that jutted from the wall.

* * * *

At lunch Mervyn felt foolishly happy. They were right, those strangers—the boy was a genius. He could paint.

"You must be proud of your son's success," one of them had said. Of course he was.

The picture was going to be painted again. "It was a pity he had slipped like that," they had said, and he laughed to himself. They had not seen the picture, and he would help this time. The boy wanted his experience, had to start where he had left off.

If only he wouldn't blush so absurdly!



THE CUP OF WATER

By BERTRAM LEIGH

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLIER

JOHN MARSDEN had come, literally, to his last sixpence—no, to be absolutely exact, to his last fivepence. Work was apparently impossible to obtain, and now that last stock-in-trade of men, hope, was utterly sold out, and he saw nothing for it but the Thames, the Thames that night. A line from Keats kept hammering itself out in his thoughts: "To cease upon the midnight with no pain." Yes, he had resolved upon that. But where was he to spend the intervening time between that present hour of three in the afternoon and the moment of his self-made appointment with eternity?

He was walking along New Oxford Street. How he had arrived there he did not know, and it was not worth the trying to remember. He was there; that was all he knew on earth, and all he needed to know. Again his thoughts had run on into phrases from Keats. Where was that particular passage to be found? He stood at the corner of a street and pondered for a while. At last he remembered. It was from the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," of course. He smiled as he repeated other lines from the poem to himself, and his first reading of it came vividly back into his mind. He had read it in the library at Westminster School, in his first term, sitting by an open window that looked on to the wall of the old refectory of the monks, with the great rose window of the Abbey rising above it, while one monotonous bell was clanging its summons to the afternoon service.

That memory of Westminster reminded him of Greek things, the things which his soul loved—the choruses of Sophocles, the odes of Pindar, coins of Corinth, the Parthenon. . . . His mind broke free of its dreaming. Was not the glory of the Parthenon in London and at his very elbow?

He had only to turn down the street at whose corner he stood, and he would come out opposite the British Museum, where the greatest pieces of the Parthenon's sculpture dwelt and had to-day their immortal being. He would look upon Greek beauty once more before he made an end; he would carry the sight of it with him into the darkness of the Hereafter.

A few minutes later Marsden was in the Elgin Room of the British Museum, seated opposite the group known as "The Three Fates," marvelling anew at the miracle of the stone drapery as so often he had marvelled before, when wealthier in pocket and richer in hope.

How long he had sat there in a contemplation that was as a healer of his spirit, wounded of late to bitterness, he did not know, when suddenly he was awakened from his reverie by someone coming to sit upon the same low, broad seat of polished wood which served to rest his own weary body. A first glance showed him that it was a girl, and that she was rather more than attractive to look upon, and a second that she was evidently feeling faint.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but can I be of any assistance to you? Would you like me to try to get you a glass of water?"

She looked at him, at first a little doubtfully, then with more confidence.

"If you wouldn't mind walking with me into the open air, I'd be grateful. I think it is the oppressiveness of the atmosphere inside."

He rose and offered his arm. She took it, and they walked out, past the beautiful "Demeter of Gnidos," past the long file of the Roman Emperors, to the porch and the colonnade outside. There they sat down upon one of the seats.

"Thank you so much," she said, a little

smile curving her pale lips. "I feel better already. It was stupid of me to be so silly, but I have not long recovered from an illness, and suppose I am weaker than I thought."

He murmured a commonplace, and wished devoutly in his heart that more than five-pence lay in his pocket. How, with no more money than that, could he offer her tea?

"The gods are propitious only to fools," he said, and did not realise that he was speaking aloud until the words were already uttered.

The girl's eyes flashed a look at him. Her faintness was passing, and now she was able to concentrate upon matters other than her own personal well-being. His well-cut but very shabby clothes, taken in conjunction with his drawn, gaunt features, proclaimed his parlous case far better than any words of his could ever have done, and what she did not actually find on the surface she fathomed intuitively.

"You do not give me quite the impression of being a fool," she remarked, with a nervous laugh, "so I shall have to decide that the gods are not propitious to you, shan't I?"

"Oh, but they are," he answered, "propitious as never was, and yet. . . ." He ended lamely, with a resigned wave of the hand.

"I haven't got the hang of it, you know, I really haven't. If the gods are propitious, then you are—what I am sure you are not. Argal—crowners' quest argument if not crowners' quest law—the gods are not propitious."

"I won't have it so. They are mightily propitious; the omens are favourable for my journey to-night. No, I haven't met a black cat, nor a white horse—only a goddess!"

She flushed a little at his words, and the colour lingered in her cheeks. She was decidedly better by now.

"Are you going a journey, then?"

"Yes—a long one."

"I wish I were. I hate being cooped up in London in the summer, and I shan't have my holiday till the end of September. Dad can't get away till then."

"Better a prospective September than a retrospective—er—which is the most abominable month in the year?"

"Personally I dislike February the most."

"How mutual! So do I. I was born in February."

He laughed, but not pleasantly. She

looked at him, then spoke deliberately and as if she were carefully choosing her words.

"I do not know you, but if you laugh often like that, I shall not allow myself to know you."

The hint of promise underlying her words made him wince. Midnight would end all promises, his own or another's to him. There was a brief, awkward pause.

"I hope your journey will be a pleasant one," she said.

"It may be—and it may not be. I cannot tell. But, please, do not let us talk about that. I beg your pardon," he added, hastily and contritely, "but I—I am rather on edge. I was not trying to snub you, far from it. If you only knew——"

He left his sentence unfinished. They sat for a while silent, looking over the pigeon-haunted space before them, and beyond, into the street, beyond even there, into a distance indiscoverable save by the inward eye. Then the girl rose to her feet.

"Will you, please, take me to have some tea?" she asked.

He rose, too, and stood facing her, and he swallowed hard.

"I can't," he said. "I—I just can't!"

She nodded.

"I know," she replied. "I know." Her lips quivered as she spoke. "But you are going to, all the same. You can't refuse an invalid—that would be too brutal—and—and here is my purse. Please—please!"

He looked into her eyes, and a glint in their grey depths decided him to laugh at his pride. He slipped the little purse into his pocket and followed tamely down the wide steps and out through the gates into the street. Soon they were ensconced within a tea-shop of the vicinity, in a corner near the window. The place was practically empty, for it was early yet, and so they could talk undisturbed. Marsden, if not his companion also, appreciated the intimate quiet of the pleasant room.

As he watched her pouring out the tea—and she made a most charming picture—his soul was smitten with a greater bitterness than ever. Why had Fate dealt with him so hardly? He grew rebellious; for a moment he was a complete anarchist; then his finely-trained mind retrieved the balance, and he could smile as he took his cup from her fingers. Greek things had not taught him to appreciate only beauty, but also proportion and due measure, in mental outlook as well as in matters of æsthetics.

At first they chatted about trivialities. Then quite suddenly she came to the attack.

"Now tell me everything about it," she asked. "Please, and I am not just inquisitive."

"I know you are not," he answered, looking at her gravely.

"You are sure?"

"Quite. To prove it, I will obey you to the letter."

And he did, keeping nothing to himself, not even his so-called journey, his midnight appointment with eternity. Long before he had half done, her eyelashes were heavy with unshed drops, and when he had finished his story she laid her hand for a moment lightly upon his. But for a little while she did not speak. A tear ran down her cheek; she put up a finger to stay its course.

"I am glad you have told me," she said at length.

She opened the daintily-worked bag which she had upon her lap, and took out a pencil, tore the flap off the envelope of a letter, and wrote a few words upon it. Then she handed it to him across the little tea-table.

"That is my father's name and the address of his office. He is the manager there, and if you will call to-morrow he will see you—I shall tell him all about you to-night—and perhaps he will be able to help you to get a job. At any rate, I know he will try—if only for my sake. I can safely promise you that."

He took the tiny slip of scribbled paper and slipped it into his pocket. At that she rose to go.

"I can't express my thanks," he stammered. "You—you are like—like the first star that peeps between broken and defeated clouds on a spring evening after rain."

He paid the bill—oh, how ashamedly!—out of her money, and she preceded him into the street. With a wry smile he handed back her purse.

"Won't you? But you will, you must——" she began, and opened the purse herself.

"Don't, don't!" he said.

"But I can't let you be without a night's lodging and a meal for the lack of a few shillings, now can I? Please be reasonable and—take this." She offered him a ten-shilling note. He shook his head mutely, not feeling able to speak.

"You can pay me back after father has found you work," she insisted, and she thrust the note into his hand.

"I can't thank you," he said. "The beggar is beggared even of his gratitude. But your charity is sweet indeed."

She did not make any answer. There was nothing to say, and even if there had been anything her voice could not have said it.

They turned into New Oxford Street and waited for the omnibus that she told him she wished to catch. Inevitably it came, and as inevitably she stepped into it. There was a raised hat, two smiles, one "Good-bye," and—which was heard only by a passing company promoter—one "God bless you!" and she was gone; and the disconcerted company promoter, looking warily over his shoulder, beheld a shabbily-dressed young man who smiled fatuously, craning his neck to follow the serpentine course of one particular omnibus as it squirmed its way in and out of the heavy traffic.

"Who's the grinning fool," he thought, "and what's he grinning at, anyway?" Then he relapsed into those intricate matters of benevolent finance, that are so properly associated with the promotion of companies, and went his way, leaving Marsden to go his way, too, and to readjust, as well as he might, his new personal outlook upon the universe and the scheme of things. So intent was he upon this he did not notice that the omnibus had stopped suddenly before it had gone any great distance, nor that two passengers, the girl and a man, had hastily alighted.

Entirely unconscious of being followed, Marsden went down Kingsway and turned off into Lincoln's Inn Fields. There, after walking nearly as far as the furthestmost gate, he sat down upon one of the seats that he found vacant, to meditate, with a strange exaltation, upon the recent events. A little later another man, rather more shabby than himself, came and sat there also.

In a little while, after a careful, if quick, scrutiny of Marsden, who was unmindful of his surroundings from dreaming exclusively of a pair of grey eyes, the other spoke.

"I wonder whether animals in the wild places of the earth feel anything of the irony of life and the inequality of chances!"

Marsden, surprised out of his own thoughts by the very incongruity of the remark, turned and looked at his neighbour. He was a spare little man, apparently in the forties, dressed like an artisan, with poverty and misery written in every crease of his worn-

out clothes and in every line of his pinched face, which was the face, not of an artisan, but of a professional man gone to seed.

"Balzac," went on this quite extraordinary person, "made the statement, with a confidence which evolutionists have as yet failed to justify, that there is only one animal. I wish there were, and that I were that one. I should then be absolved from conforming to civilisation and to the code that draws a clear distinction between what is mine and what is somebody else's. You behold in me the primitive man spoiled by a genteel upbringing. There is not one animal; there



"I never knew people were so difficult to track, let alone overtake!"



are two animals, the greater and the lesser—the animal of the desert and the animal of the city. The animal of the desert hunts for his food; the animal of the city merely lays snares for it. I am a sort of human live-bait in a trap set by circumstances. What do you say to that?"

He cocked his head on one side and

seemed to await Marsden's reply, not with polite curiosity, but with breathless concern.

Marsden, rather at a loss, perfunctorily answered: "I don't quite understand you."

"No, perhaps not. But I fancy that you and I are in the same old waterlogged boat, both of us down-at-heels gentlemen, penniless and workless. Why don't we steal, eh?"

"Heaven knows!" said Marsden, staring into the branches of a plane tree. "It's not cowardice."

"There are two answers, a cynical one and a sentimental one," went on the other. "By the way, my name is Swanley."

"And mine Marsden."

"Well, to continue: the cynical answer is that we are too heavily coated with the

veneer of civilisation to be sufficiently primitive; the sentimental answer is that we remember either a human mother or an *alma mater*, and won't let our memories down."

"Is that sentimentality? I should call it pride."

"By which I am able, brother, to diagnose your state as worse than mine. I refer to your spiritual state, not your worldly one: as to that, I fear mine is worse than yours. Unless—Are you married?"

"No."

"I am. And my wife is ill and we have three small children, and they go hungry!"

There fell a silence at that, Marsden being scrupulously diffident of offering merely verbal sympathy and having nothing tangible to offer in its stead. In a little while Swanley began to speak again, this time in a low voice and with none of his previous affectation of mental agility. He told a sad tale—of the loss of his clerkship through his enlistment during the War; of the bankruptcy of the firm that used to employ him, leaving him no open post to which to return; of the futile, heartrending struggle, day after day, to obtain work—a struggle which had now become narrowed down to one of obtaining the very necessities of life for his family and himself, all his scanty savings having gradually and remorselessly dwindled until there was nothing left to fall back upon.

Then Marsden told the other of his own case, omitting, however, the facts of his adventure in the Museum and its consequences; and the two of them sat silent, side by side, brothers and men. Simultaneously their thoughts drifted away from the present to the past. Swanley was remembering a mustard field in flower, and a first kiss while larks flickered and passionately sang in the stainless blue; Marsden was remembering, once again, the tolling of the Abbey bell while he sat in Westminster School library, with a book open upon his knees, not Greek this time, but a biography of Sir Philip Sidney. How well he remembered reading it! He was young then, and full of ideal chivalry; and the cup of water given at Zutphen had been as formulative to the one side of his disciplined spirit as Greek art had been to the other. To the "Nothing overmuch" of the Greek philosopher the hero's "Thy need is greater than mine" had been not merely complementary, but, as it were, fraternal.

"Well, I must be getting along," said Swanley, and rose from the seat. "I'd like to knock down the first well-dressed man I come across and rifle his pockets, but, although it is for her, it is she who prevents me, despite my late diatribe against a genteel upbringing. We are a quaint pair, you and I—as quaint as the million or so others who are as exactly like us as pea is like pea in a pod. I won't say 'Good luck!' for I've a feeling that I'm a bit of a Jonah. Good-bye!"

With a nod he turned away and was gone before Marsden had found anything in answer. Dully the latter watched him as he went, noticing the pathetic droop of poor Swanley's shoulders; and in his ears there still throbbed the monotonous clanging of the Abbey bell, and still he could feel a heavy book lying upon his knees, open at an illustration which depicted Sidney handing the historic cup of water to the dying soldier.

Hastily Marsden rose and ran after Swanley, calling his name. Swanley turned and waited for him.

"Yes?" he asked.

"I'd forgotten. Here—take these," said Marsden, out of breath, and handed the other a certain pencilled slip of paper and a ten-shilling note. "Go to this address to-morrow and ask for the man whose name is written here; he's expecting you—me, I mean, but he doesn't know me, and—your need is greater than mine. He'll find you a job. Don't hesitate! Here, take it, Swanley! And this note will give your wife and kiddies something to go on with till you are fixed up."

"But, old man, I can't. God bless you, but this chance is for you, not for me. I can't rob you of it. Hang it all, I can't! As for taking your money when you need it as badly as I do—I'm not such a sweep, Marsden. I can't possibly take it."

"Yes, you can. You've a wife and three kiddies to look after. I've nobody. Don't be a fool!"

"I can't take both. In any case, I can't masquerade as you. I'd be found out in no time."

"Didn't I tell you that he doesn't know me? Just tell him you're the man to whom that slip was given. He'll do the rest." And Marsden hurriedly poured the tale of the afternoon's adventure into Swanley's ear.

"But I'll be found out, I tell you. Then I'd be no better off than I am now."

"Yes, you would. You'd at least have got the job, and if you'd tackled the work all right—well, possession is nine-tenths of the law. Besides, if anything went wrong, you'd only have to tell your own story; it is a more pitiful one than mine, and if mine gained sympathy, yours would, too."

"But what about you? No, I can't take it—I can't take either, Marsden."

"Oh, I'll be all right," replied Marsden, and handed the other the note and the slip of paper. "Don't you worry about me. I—I had an alternative proposition. I shall keep that appointment instead of this."

"You shan't—oh, you can't!" cried an agonised voice behind him—a voice that was half breathless and half tearful. Turning, Marsden beheld the girl he had seen into an omnibus only a short while before, and beside her stood an elderly man who was quite obviously her father.

"Mr. Marsden, I presume," said the latter.

Marsden hastily withdrew his almost incredulous gaze from the girl's sweet, agitated face.

"Yes," he answered, and his heart began to beat again.

"My name is Kenyon," went on the elderly man. "I was in the 'bus that Beryl—my daughter—got into just now, and before I had scarcely had time to recognise her I found the 'bus stopped and myself on the pavement and taken firmly by the arm. Phew! Thank Heaven, I'm not by profession a sleuth of the law; I never knew people were so difficult to track, let alone overtake!"

"I told him all about you as we came along," broke in his daughter impatiently.

"And I've heard the sequel with my own ears," said her father. "I won't say what I think of it to your face, Marsden; I'll remember it behind your back." And Kenyon chuckled at his feeble witticism.

Beryl said nothing, but she smiled at Marsden. The smile of a woman in some circumstances is a thing of fire, and in other circumstances it is a thing of light; her smile to him at that moment was a thing of light.

"Well," continued Kenyon, "no further explanations are necessary on either side, and I am a busy man and already late for an appointment. So I have only one thing to say and only one minute to say it in: both of you come to my office to-morrow morning at ten-thirty. I can fix up the two of you, at any rate temporarily, even if it is only in the packing department. The next steps are more or less your own concern. Ten-thirty. You've got the address. My dear, your impetuosity has cost me a taxi, but it has been worth it, at all events, to these two fellows."

"That it has, sir," said Swanley. "What can we say to you? It is more than charity—it is salvation."

"And life," said Marsden in a low voice to Beryl. She winced, but she was smiling, nevertheless.

"Tut, tut!" replied Kenyon, and would not hear another word. "I hope to see you both to-morrow. Good-bye!"

In a moment he was gone, and the girl, too.

For a little while the two men stood silently looking after the rapidly receding figures of father and daughter. Then, without a word, and each keeping a stiff upper lip, they solemnly shook hands.





COLD COMFORT.

HE: I backed Sentinel, and the wretched thing didn't run!
 SHE: What a shame! Never mind, though—Humdrum, Peevis, and Hopskip were the first three, so it couldn't have got placed, anyway!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE OPPORTUNE SNAP.

By J. Roland Fay.

AT the completion of the seventh wholly unsuccessful attempt to "take" the babies, Philip set down his camera with a gesture of despair and prostrated himself on the lawn; Eleanor sighed, and moved wearily after the more active half of her twins, who was rapidly disappearing under the currant bushes; Mildred hurried to remove our own baby out of arm's reach of the other half of Eleanor's twins, who was in immediate danger of being strangled.

I, in my appointed position behind Philip, stood listlessly, with a tin trumpet in one hand and a golliwog in the other, and became conscious of profuse perspiration.

At length the babies were once more herded into a group. Philip rose with his camera in readiness; Eleanor and Mildred joined me, one on either side.

"You take the trumpet this time," I said to Eleanor, "and I'll bang on the water-can with the rake; Mildred had better squeak the

squeaker and jig the golliwog." Our object, I need hardly say, was to obtain the attention of the babies, and to hold it for the brief moment necessary for an opportune snap by Philip.

We started. Philip snapped. But we were still far from satisfied; the chief characteristic of the result, we feared, would be the headless body of the active twin, who, notwithstanding our performance, had started on a crawling expedition behind the others.

"We want something arresting, something entirely novel," said Philip, "something they have neither seen nor heard before; they are merely bored by tin trumpets and golliwogs. Can you," he continued, addressing me, "can you stand on your head, wave your legs, and howl like a wolf?"

I was momentarily startled, but, recalling certain gymnastic exploits of my younger days, I said that I thought I could.

"Eleanor and Mildred," continued Philip decisively, "will let their hair down and whirl

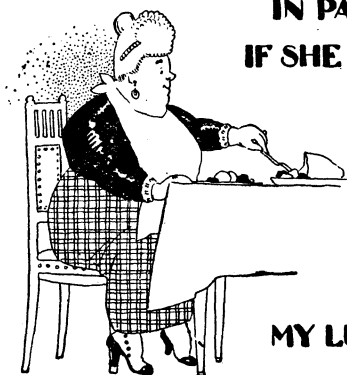


THE BUTCHER'S CAT

IS SLEEK AND FAT;
THE BUTCHER'S CAT IS GREEDY.
SHE SMUGLY SITS
ENJOYING BITS
WHILE OTHER CATS ARE NEEDY.



THE BUTCHER'S SPOUSE
IN VELVET BLOUSE,
AND BOOTS THAT SCARCELY BUTTON,
WOULD RAISE HER EYES
IN PAINED SURPRISE
IF SHE COULD GUESS WHAT I SURMISE —
THAT SHE'S ANOTHER GLUTTON!
I'M SURE SHE PICKS AT THIS & THAT.
THE CHOICEST SNACKS OF LEAN & FAT.
I HATE THAT WOMAN AND HER CAT.



MY LUNCH WAS FROZEN MUTTON.

Butcher

themselves round until it stands out straight; they will at the same time screech like parrots." He abruptly left us and, with a deftness that surprised the babies, rearranged the group.

"Now," said Philip, concentrating once more upon his camera, "are you ready?"

Eleanor and Mildred, with their hair about their shoulders, hoisted me to an inverted perpendicular position; my legs waved vigorously. I couldn't help it.

"Go!" said Philip.

My legs continued to wave; Eleanor and Mildred whirled: together we growled and screeched.

"Good!" yelled Philip. "Excellent! Keep it up!"

Faster whirled Eleanor and Mildred. More vigorously waved my legs—to keep my balance. The noise we made was extraordinary.

"All right!" cried Philip at last. We

collapsed upon the lawn, and all the babies laughed.

Philip laughed. This was, perhaps, only natural, but there was something in Philip's laugh that made me sit up and look at him. I felt strangely concerned. I rapidly questioned him. He confessed. Having successfully snapped the babies, he had, with equal success, snapped Eleanor, Mildred, and me!



Berry is not an angel. She is just a good child with a sunny, sweet disposition. But on those few-and-far-between occasions when

The young wife sat plying the needle. A coat of her husband's was in her lap. As the husband appeared, she said fretfully:

"It's too bad, the careless way the tailor sewed this button on. This is the fifth time I've had to put it back for you."



He was the father of fourteen children. He agreed, one spring holiday, to take them to the seashore for the week-end. They set off, reached the station, got their tickets, and were about to board the train, when the proud parent was touched on the shoulder by a policeman.



QUITE!

"WELL, my man, what are you doing, may I ask?"

"I'm pruning, sir."

"Pruning? But surely it's a bit early for prunes."

she is naughty, she is punished. Her mother always tries to make her punishment serve as a lesson to her, and, although Betty is only four, she always finds the moral. Father would allow her to go her own way, pleading that she is still too young for punishment.

On the most recent occasion of misbehaviour, mother was prepared to apply the needed lesson. Dad protested vigorously. He would not have baby's sensitive feelings hurt by punishment. The baby settled the matter herself. Turning somewhat impatiently to her champion, she said: "Now, daddy, you don't understand. Mother is trying to make me a good girl when I grow up."

"What have you been doin'?" the policeman growled fiercely.

"Me? Why, nothing!" stammered the surprised man.

The policeman waved his arm toward the family. "Then why," he asked, "is this here crowd a-followin' of you?"



THERE is a possibility of a reduction in medical fees shortly. People who have been saving up their illnesses can now let themselves go.



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"We were visited by burglars last week, but after turning our house upside down and spreading my jewellery, silver toilet things, etc., all over the floor, the only article they thought worthy of taking was the **Ciro Pearl** necklace I got from you last month." (Simla.)

FROM KENYA COLONY.

"The **Ciro Pearls** arrived by last mail, and I am exceedingly pleased with them. They certainly surpassed my expectations and I can honestly say I have never seen such a splendid reproduction of the genuine article. Needless to say, they have been greatly admired, and altogether I am highly satisfied." (Nairobi, Kenya.)

FROM SOUTH AMERICA.

"The day after the **Ciro Pearls** arrived we went to a dance, and everyone thought they were real pearls. They were greatly admired, and some friends told my wife to be careful with them, as there had been so many robberies lately and it was dangerous to go about with such expensive pearls." (Monte Video.)

FROM THE WEST INDIES.

"I might say your **Ciro Pearls** are wonderful. They are all they are claimed to be and more. I have travelled the world and seen numerous pearls, both real and artificial, but have yet to come across the artificial ones that can reach the same standard as yours. Again I say they are simply wonderful." (Jamaica.)

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A PRESENT FOR BABY.

By E. S. J. Darmady.

As soon as I got back to England, Peggy and Peter asked me to tea, so that I might inspect my godson. I accepted with pleasure, but made the condition that if I went I should be given a proper nursery tea, with thick bread-and-butter and brown sugar on the second piece, the sort of tea which ends by your asking "Please, may I get down?" and someone answering, "Yes, but sponge your hands before you touch anything."

Peggy received me in the nursery, and announced they had sent nurse out for the afternoon, so that my wishes might be realised. We had quite the proper kind of tea. The bread was very thick, and after I had the plain piece first, I felt less eager to eat the sugary slice than I expected, and the gingerbread was out of the question. Peter ate more, but not straight off, because he lost so much time snatching things away from his son, and then going to wash after he had touched him. That was wrong. We never washed in the middle of nursery tea, nor afterwards, unless nurse made us. Still, in spite of this departure from precedent, it was better than standing about a drawing-room, balancing little bits of bread-and-butter on the edge of a saucer.

"It is very comfortable—just as it should be," I said. "What used we to do after tea? I don't feel inclined to run up and down and play horses."

"No," replied Peggy. "We used to lie on the hearth-rug and read books, or play quietly with our toys."

"Talking of toys—" cried Peter. "Here, Peggy, hold on to Baby and keep him at one end, out of the way. You see this aeroplane? You fix the bomb—so. Then you choose the spot where you want the bomb to drop, measure the distance, screw this up to the mark, and it ought to be released at the right place."

After some calculation and a little wangling, we got the thing working accurately. Peggy was rather tiresome, letting Baby crawl where a bomb might hit him, until Peter and I took turns at amusing him, while she built houses with bricks for us alternately to bomb down. Altogether, it was a ripping afternoon.

"Now," I said, as I was going away, "you must let me come and play with Baby again, and, by the by, give me a hint what he wants for his birthday."

"What about an opposition aeroplane," said

Peter, "so that we needn't wait so long for a turn?"

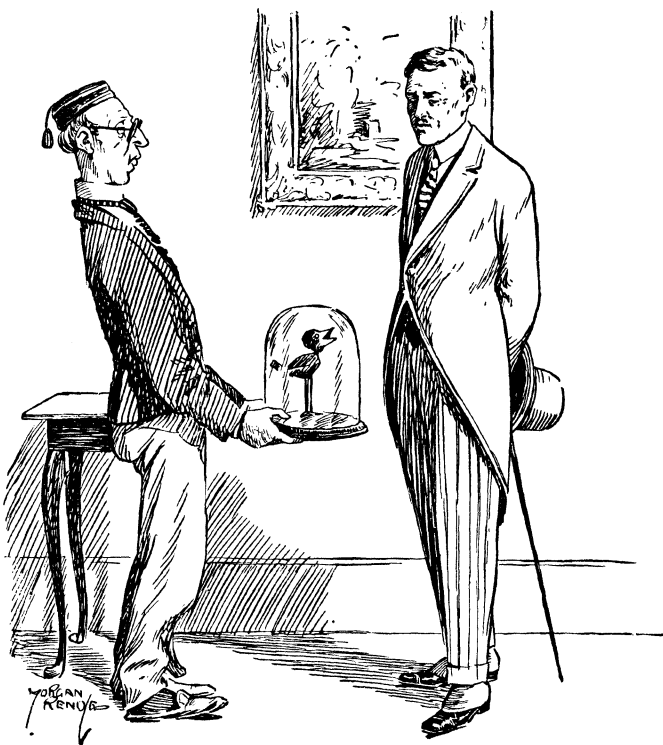
"No," said Peggy, "that's selfish. Besides, we were very fair about turns. I wish you would get him a kitten. I saw some darlings at the Stores, and we have no cat now."

"Wouldn't it scratch him?" I asked.

"Oh, I'll keep it out of his way," she replied.

"I'll look for one," I promised.

But while I was choosing the kitten, I saw in another department something more suitable for Baby, so I addressed the kitten to Peggy, and sent the other present to Baby with an explanation. "You see," I wrote, "I am giving him a railed-in enclosure, a sort of cage. It will keep him out of the way while we play with his toys."



SOME BIRD.

OWNER (to prospective purchaser of house and furniture): I should like to take this. It is the cuckoo from a clock I used to have. It was the only thing that ever dared to butt in while my wife was talking.

THE eyeglass is becoming increasingly fashionable for ladies. Novelists will now be able to do new things with heroines' eyes, such as: "She screwed her monocle into her violet orb and regarded him with a glassy stare."



"Do you find that your daughter's cooking has improved since she attended the culinary classes?"

"Oh, yes. She now calls hashed mutton *fricassee de veau*."

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TURNING THE TABLES.

At Tottenham, in tavern chair,
I from my bitter blew the foam,
Before the small enclosure where
All straying cattle find a home.
The host, who loves his little joke,
Said: "After searching London round,
I find I am the only bloke
Who sells his liquor by the pound."

I chuckled at his quaint conceit,
I drained my gleaming pewter dry,
Prepared to make a swift retreat,
And flummoxed him with this reply:
"Although your statement may be true,
You haven't any cause to bounce,
For, near the cat house at the Zoo,
They always vend it by the ounce."

THE REGATTA MYSTERY.

SEASIDE GIRL: Oh, look, George dear! That sweet little yacht with the blue flag has won the race.

BOATMAN: No, she ain't, miss; t'other one with the red flag looks like pulling it off.

GIRL: Oh, but that's miles behind!

GEORGE: Yes, I know, but the one that gets in last wins the jolly old cup. Frightfully puzzling, but I had it all explained to me by a yachting Johnny once. It's something to do with starting points, or the wind, and the cut of the jib, and rot of that sort, if you know what I mean.

GIRL: How frantically interesting! Let's come and listen to the pierrots.



THE DIFFERENCE.

CONSTABLE: You were born in the country?

MR. GILES: Yes—ye-s, I was.

CONSTABLE: Well, if you aren't careful, you'll die in London.

I told the story to a chum,

A fellow in the C.I.D.

Within his belt he tucked each thumb,

And beamed indulgently on me;

Then, with the faintest trace of sneer,

He hoist me with my own petard:

"When I require a drink of beer,

I often buy it by the Yard."

José Hall.

"My dear," said a young wife to her husband,
"the baby has been trying to talk again."

"What was he talking about?"

"I think it must have been politics. He started very calmly, but in a few minutes he was as angry and red in the face as he could be. It is perfectly wonderful how he takes after you."

At a religious service in Scotland a youngster accompanied his grandparents, and sat perfectly still through the sermon, looking as wise as a young owl. At the close of the service someone congratulated the grandfather upon the excellence of the boy's behaviour.

"Aye," returned the veteran, "Fred's weel threatened afore he gangs in."

In an essay entitled "Our Country" a student in a country school, after referring to the Antipodes, explained:

"One reason why we keep so far ahead of the other nations is because we are getting up and going to work every morning while the people on the other side of the globe are just going to bed."

THE WINDSOR

A detailed black and white illustration of a woman in a boat, holding a long pole. She is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved dress with a dark belt. In the background, another person is visible in a boat, and a large umbrella is partially visible on the left. The overall style is that of a vintage magazine cover.

JULY

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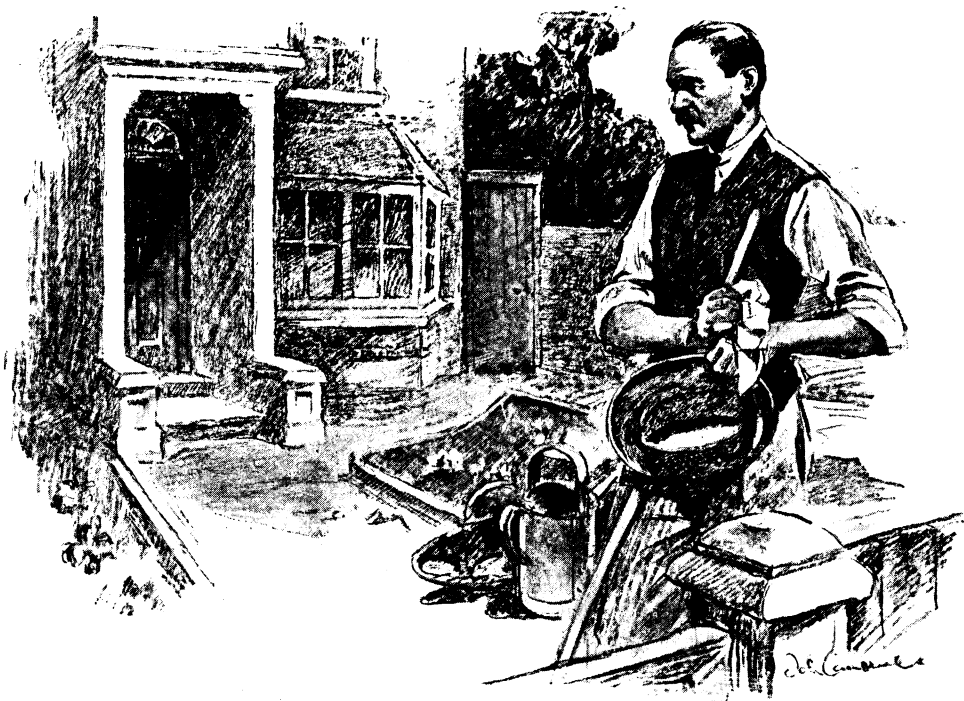
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REGATTA DAY.
By GEORGE HARRIS



"He hated his front to look worse than his neighbours'. So he took off his coat to the stubborn little piece in front of 4, Myrtle Villas."

THE GARDEN

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

THERE are men who walk faster when they come to a hill. Richard Harrison was one of them. It is a good way to get on, if you don't meet too many hills, but Harrison did. So he arrived at the stock-taking age of forty without having made as much as progress in life as he had hoped; felt "fed up" with hills, and began to call himself a failure. Nobody else called him that, but his friends said that "Dick" hadn't done "so well as you might have expected," except in marriage. Everyone agreed that he had done well in this. He thought so himself.

He supposed that the physical weakness which troubled him just after his fortieth birthday was due to his despondency—confusing cause and effect, as we all do

—and fought against it as a cowardly giving in. He imagined that he had concealed it from everyone else; but one afternoon in early June the Senior Partner of his firm sent him home directly after lunch.

"You aren't yourself lately, Harrison," he said, with a kindly hand on his *employé's* shoulder. "I've been watching you for some time. If I were you I'd see a doctor. If he thinks that an extra holiday will do you good, we'll make that all right."

"I do feel a bit rotten to-day," Harrison owned unwillingly. "It's nothing but an attack of indigestion, sir—just indigestion. I shall be all right to-morrow. Perhaps it *would* do me good to go home this afternoon and put in a few hours at my garden."

Copyright, 1923, by Owen Oliver, in the United States of America.

"Umph!" said the Senior Partner. "Your garden, eh?"

He smiled a little and shook his head a little. He lived Harrison's way and knew his front garden. Everyone in the neighbourhood did. It had been a builder's dumping-ground before Myrtle Villas were put up, and a good deal of the dump remained under the surface. No one but Harrison would have tried to grow anything there. But he loved flowers. He would not grow them in the back garden (which had a good soil) because he loved children more, and "the youngsters" wanted the back garden to play in. Moreover, he hated his front to look worse than his neighbours'. So he took off his coat to the stubborn little piece in front of 4, Myrtle Villas, and wrestled with it.

"I don't think you want gardening this afternoon, Harrison," the Senior Partner protested, after an interval, "but a rest."

"A change of work is as good as a rest, sir," Harrison claimed.

"Ah, that's a young man's maxim, my dear chap. We have to alter our proverbs as the years go on. In your case a rest would be the greatest change, eh?"

"I'll see how I feel when I get home," Harrison compromised.

When Harrison got out of the 'bus, the accustomed world seemed to be different—to be tottering round him. He could not find enough breath in the spring air while he walked home. He held to the gate-post for a minute before he walked in.

"I feel almost as if I *shall* have to lie down for a few 'minutes,'" he owned, "but . . ."

He looked despairingly at the ungracious little patch, with its straggling bushes, and its stunted plants, putting out a sickly blossom here and there; glanced shamefacedly at the blaze of colour in the front garden to the left and the front garden to the right . . .

"Just half an hour's nap," he apologised to himself. "I really can't work till I've had that. . . . Perhaps if I began working, this giddiness would pass off. . . . No, I won't begin now. Once I begin I can never leave off. I'll have a—a—what was I thinking?—a rest."

He staggered up the path, resolved not to look at the garden for fear he should see something compelling to be done at once. He halted half-way to pick a caterpillar from a rose bush (which never bore roses). He tried to throw the caterpillar over the fence

into the road, but it fell far short. Then he laughed a strange, crying laugh which brought his wife running to him with outstretched arms. . . .

"Dick? . . . Dick, old man? . . ."

"Everything I do is like that," he told her. "Falls short. Look at the garden, Jennie. Look at the garden! It's my life. . . . *My life!*"

"Dick! You aren't well. Hold on to me, dear. Lean as hard as you like. You know how strong I am." (This was one of little Mrs. Harrison's delusions.) "Now come in and rest, and don't worry about the old garden. You've done *wonders* with it. Why, it was only a cemetery for brickbats when we came here! Anyone but you would have gravelled it. I think it's quite good—considering! . . . Lean hard on me, and try to walk. . . . What's the matter, dear?"

"Just—just feeling a bit rotten. I shall be all right in a minute. I—I—I do feel rather queer, Jennie."

He swayed and would have fallen if his wife had not supported him. When she concluded that he had fainted, she lifted him right up. He was a big man, and she was a small woman, but she carried him indoors to the drawing-room sofa.

"The strength was given me," she explained afterwards.

She was like that.

He was only semi-conscious when he came to from the swoon. Their doctor arrived soon afterwards, running with the breathless maid whom Mrs. Harrison had sent to fetch him. He could get nothing out of Harrison. He felt him and sounded him, and asked Mrs. Harrison questions; looked very grave, and said that he should 'phone for a specialist.

"What I don't understand," he said, "is that, if it's what I'm afraid of, he must have had a good deal of pain. I saw him only last night, and he didn't mention it."

"He wouldn't," his wife said. "Old Dick would never give in; never give in! . . . You don't think—?"

"I just don't know," the doctor owned.

The specialist arranged for Harrison to go to a hospital for an operation in two days' time.

Meanwhile he lay in the front bedroom. The little wife had his bed moved to the window overlooking the garden.

"It will be something for him to look at," she said. "He will notice his garden, if he notices anything, when I am not there. He notices *me*. Oh, yes! When I talk to him,

he tries to smile; and yesterday afternoon he tried to stroke my hand. I moved mine across and across, so that he should think he was doing it. I wouldn't let him think he couldn't do things."

He did know his wife, and even the children and the doctor, in a way; but somehow they did not seem quite real to him. They were people he had known rather than people he knew. The only convincing reality in his present universe was the stubborn, stunted garden. That lay before his eyes for long hours, distinct in the sunlight, and burnt itself into his numbed existence. Only he did not see it so much as a garden as the representation of what his life came to—a summary of great efforts and small results, a leaden threat of future difficulties to cope with. When he was well, difficulties had merely interested him; but now they alarmed him. He did not feel that he wanted any more hard gardening, but to cultivate some easy spot where effortless labour would grow wonderful flowers.

It did not seem to him at the time that the world was anything but a number of gardens—his present allotment being the contrary little patch outside the bedroom window—or that life and after-life were anything much but gardening—his gardening perhaps soon to be done in another place. He thought that he would like to take with him the comforting presence—Jennie? . . . Yes, Jennie—that lifted him and arranged his pillows; but he could not find the resolution to grasp it; could not bring it into his present from the past. He knew there was a man in the past who used to be himself, but he could not find him.

He partly recovered himself for a few moments when the ambulance arrived to take him to the hospital; he knew the comforting presence for his wife; realised that she was dear to him, and he to her, and that she was begging for some sign that he remembered her.

"You know me, don't you, Dick? . . . Old Dick? . . ."

He made a supreme effort and managed to speak.

"Jennie . . . Missus . . . All right!"

"Yes, yes, darling. You will be all right," she declared. ("I was quite bright, and didn't cry before him," she told her mother afterwards.) "The doctor says you have such a good constitution, and that will pull you through. Easily, dear! Easily! You are very much to me, Dick. . . . You will soon come back to your old missus, and

the children, and your old garden . . . Dick! *My Dick!*"

"All right!" he muttered. "Jennie!"

He made a final effort and returned two of her kisses. Then the attendants carried him away. He missed her for a few moments, wished he had been able to respond more, but he felt a great thankfulness that the effort was over.

"Now," he rejoiced, "I shall not have to do things any more."

He thought this, with a greater thankfulness, as they carried him down the path through the ungracious garden.

"Thank Heaven, I'm done with *you*. Next time, perhaps, I'll have a decent garden."

He had quite made up his mind that the rest of his gardening was to be done elsewhere.

Harrison's wife walked down the stairs behind him, stood at the front door seeing him taken away, clung to the doorpost.

"If he kissed me for the last time," she thought. "Oh, thank God, he *did* . . . Twice. . . . Almost the third time. . . . If he's looking for the last time on the garden that he loved so. . . ."

The doctor put his arm through hers as the ambulance started. He thought her rather a delicate woman, and felt afraid how she would "stand it," so he had stayed with her.

"Thank you," she said. "I am all right. I *can't* give way, you see. There are the children. . . . His and mine. . . . His and mine. . . . I do not think any husband was ever quite so good to anyone. . . . I shall put in an hour a day in the garden till he comes back. He will, won't he, doctor?"

The doctor blew his nose.

"I pray God so, my dear lady. Of course it is a very serious operation. Still, under Providence. . . ."

He blew his nose again.

"Some days," his wife said desperately, as if she would bribe Providence, "I think I could make more than an hour for it."

"You will feel that you are doing something for him, eh? Yes, yes. . . . If only he had told me of the pains sooner! He must have had them for quite a long while."

"He didn't tell even *me*! Sometimes I fancied that he was a little touchy. I shall never forgive myself. He must have thought I was unfeeling, disagreeable."

"Tut, tut!" the doctor protested. "Tut, tut! He wouldn't think that. I'm a good mind to tell you something I remember him saying. It was one evening when we were

talking out in this very garden. I stopped to have a 'buck' with him as I was going home from a late visit. When the second Johnson boy swallowed the squeaker. You know. I was chaffing Harrison over his gardening; telling him that he was trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. 'I've been doing that all my life, doctor,' he said. 'I think I rather like the game.' I believe the old beggar did—believe he did!"

"He was such a worker," his wife claimed. "So—well, I often used to laugh and tell him that I believed he *liked* meeting difficulties."

"Obstinate old rascal! . . . 'Anyhow,' he said, 'perhaps it's as well that I do what I can with sows' ears, as I've never had silk all my life, except the little missus' . . . *Except the little missus.* Do you note that?"



"Can I be a gardener here?" Harrison asked. 'I would begin as an under-gardener, of course.'

do you take us for? You don't suppose we'd worry the good chap with an operation if it were hopeless, do you? We hope. . . . Well, I don't want to make you too sanguine, you see. . . . Resolution pulls many a doubtful case through, my dear lady. He is nothing if not resolute. He will make a big fight to come back to the little missus and the little children."

"And his old garden!" She wiped her eyes and tried to smile. "I shall try to make it look nice for him!"

The doctor nodded.

"And the little children," he said, "and the house, and everything else, eh? By the way, don't forget to look after the little missus. He might like to see her looking nice if—when he comes back. I shall send a tonic for *her*."

"Oh, me! I'm as strong as a horse, really, doctor. It's only—I did everything I could for him, of course; but if I could have done more . . . You really *think* he will be all right, don't you, doctor?"

"I hope so. He has a first-rate man to do it. We must hope for the best—hope for the best. I pray God we shall see him again with his coat off, fighting this pestilential old garden. You know, it was sown with bricks before the house was built. However, a brick wall won't stop *him*, eh?"

"I saw him look at it as he went out," Mrs. Harrison stated, "and I was sure what he was thinking: 'I'll have another round with you.' He is resolute, isn't he, doctor? And resolution is the great thing. . . . Now he's making up his brave old mind to fight through the—the—to come back to us."

* * * *

As a matter of fact, Harrison did not think any more of his old garden once he had left it. After he arrived at the hospital he slept most of the time. When he was awake he scarcely thought, only dreamed. His dreams were almost entirely of a new garden, until he was about to take the

"Oh! . . . Oh! . . . Oh! . . ."

"There, there! Let yourself cry. It will do you good."

"Nothing will do me good unless it does Dick good," she declared. "Nothing! . . . Doctor, it isn't— isn't hopeless?"

"Hopeless? Good gracious, no! What

anæsthetic. The present awesome reality gripped him for a moment then. He looked about a little, shuddered a little, clenched his hands to keep himself from showing fear, and found something hard in his right hand. He recollected that the—his—Jennie. That was it!—that Jennie had pressed it in his palm before he was taken away from her. . . . A locket. That was it. He had often seen it hanging round her neck. He wished that she were attached to it now; had an idea that she was inside it in some strange way. He fumbled at it with feeble fingers.

"Shall I open it for you?" the still-faced nurse asked. "There. . . . It is a kind face. . . . A sweet face. . . . Is she your wife?"

"Wife," he agreed. "Jennie. . . . I should like *her* to be there."

"There?" the nurse queried. "Do you mean here?"

"Garden," he muttered. He felt sure that he was going to one.

"Garden?" The nurse puzzled.

"Yes, yes. You will soon be back in your home and garden, we hope. When you are better she will come and see you *here*; directly it is over, if you are strong enough. It will soon be done now. Here are the doctors. . . . Would you like to hold it?"

"Ready?" a big, brusque white-coated doctor asked. "You've only to breathe slowly and deeply. . . . Can you give me a bit more elbow room, nurse? What are you doing?"

"Holding it where he can see," the nurse said. "When he can't

"You women!" the anæsthetist muttered. He made a grunting sound which



"'A gardener?' . . . 'What is that?'"

the nurse took for a laugh.

"You may laugh," she said, "but if you were

I shall put it in his hand. . . . She's his wife." in his place——

"I'd like to have you for the nurse," he

said, without moving his eyes from the patient. He spoke chaffingly, but he made a little more room to let her hold the locket near. "I don't know that I was laughing, nurse. . . . Now you can put it in his hand. . . . Is this deep enough, Sir Henry?"

"A little more," the great surgeon said. "Is the locket-lady at hand, nurse?"

"Yes, sir. . . . You mean——?"

"I don't *mean* anything. . . . It's principally Dr. Jarvis's trouble. I can do my part."

"Left it too long and let himself get run down," the anæsthetist said. "*My* question is whether he'll rally. . . . Are they friends of yours, nurse?"

"I look upon all my patients as friends," the quiet nurse said.

"How about the doctors?" he asked. (Again he seemed to speak chaffingly, but he has now married the nurse.)

"That ought to do," the surgeon said. "Now. . . ."

* * * * *

When Harrison woke from his sleep he was not surprised to find that the bare hospital room had gone. He had not regarded it as anything but a halting-place on his way to his new garden. But he was rather disconcerted not to find a garden, only a great grassy valley lying among countless grassy hills. There were many passages between the hills, and he felt sure that these would lead to gardens; but the roads were not sign-posted. He would have liked to discover one with "Richard H. Harrison" and a pointing finger upon it.

"I didn't think you had to find your own way after you were dead," he muttered.

He had no doubt that he was dead, because he felt no pain, and his limbs seemed to have no weight in them; and he had no doubt that he had not yet reached his final destination. He did not know how he knew that, but he did know.

He looked round at the passes, but he could not see to the end of any of them.

"It seems," he reflected, "that you have to chance it, just as you do in life. That's a pity. I thought they'd manage things better in the next life. . . . But now it isn't the 'next'. . . . I wonder if I could find anyone to direct me; give me a guide-book, or a map, perhaps, if they have them."

He saw some sheep grazing a little way off; reflected that where there were sheep there should be a shepherd, and walked toward them. They ran away as he approached. Following the sheep, he found the

shepherd to whose protection they retreated—a noble-faced man with a long beard, sitting on a tree-stump, and binding up a leg which a lamb had hurt. The shepherd did not wait for him to speak, but nodded and smiled and addressed him.

"What can I do for you, my friend?" he asked. He had a deep, kind voice.

"I was Richard Hardy Harrison," Harrison explained, "but now I suppose I am not. I seem to be dead."

"There is no such thing as death," the shepherd told him. "You only go from one place to another. Now you are between places."

"That is what I meant," Harrison explained. "I am looking for my new place, sir."

"I see. . . . What kind of place do you want to find?"

"A place," Harrison said, "where the best flowers grow; a garden—a garden that isn't any trouble. Is there a garden like that here?"

"There is a garden like that," the shepherd told him. "It is where death would be, if there were any death. Life, my friend, is principally taking trouble."

"I have had enough of that," Harrison said. "The garden I had when I lived—lived on earth, I mean—was all trouble, and my life was all work. Now I want to rest."

"I wonder," the shepherd said, "if that would satisfy you? . . . Myself, I like work—work that does good to others. That is why I am a shepherd. My sheep keep me busy. They are always doing something that they shouldn't—going astray, hurting themselves. There is one that I must look for now; teach it to find its right place and its way home, if it will learn. . . . Are you sure that your right place is a beautiful, effortless garden?"

"That," Harrison declared, "is what I should choose, if there is such a place."

"There is such a place," the shepherd told him.

"And will they let me go there?"

"There or to any other garden. This is the country of Choice, the Place Between Places. Perhaps you had better see the garden before you choose it."

"Have you seen it?" Harrison asked.

"I have seen it, and places even more beautiful than that."

"But you couldn't stay there?" Harrison asked sympathetically.

"I could have stayed there, but my

sheep needed me. They stray so. Are there no sheep that need *you*, Richard Harrison?"

"I don't want to look after sheep," Harrison asserted. "I am tired of looking after things—had too much of it. I want a garden—an easy garden, where flowers grow without any trouble."

"Well," the shepherd said, "the choice is yours. Every Being must choose for himself, or he would not be a Being. It has been granted you to be that. The garden you desire is at the end of that pass. The fourth to the left. God bless you and keep your feet."

Harrison thanked the kind shepherd, and went to the pass and along it. Presently it brought him into a wonderful land of flowers.

Oh, it was a wonderful, wonderful land! There was no end to the flower country. It stretched as far as eye could see. Before his eager, approving eyes there lay great beds of flowers of single colours, great beds of flowers of mingled colours, long rows of flowers of mingled colours, long rows of zephyr-like flowers swaying a little in the soft breeze. The bushes were loaded with flowers. The trees were loaded with blossom, and flowering creepers covered their stems. There were more flowers than he had ever dreamed were in the universe, and they were more beautiful flowers than he had ever imagined—super-flowers of all colours and kinds. Every flower was perfect. There was nothing but flowers except some white, weedless paths, and some fountains dripping into ponds of water-lilies. And the fragrance of the air! And the sweet restfulness of it all!

"I have come to Heaven!" Harrison cried, with arms uplifted in thankfulness. "It is more than I deserve! I suppose it had to be that, or the other place, and as I didn't deserve either, they gave me the benefit of the doubt. I always hoped they'd settle it that way!"

The question had often puzzled him when he lived (on earth). He could never think that he was good enough for Heaven, or bad enough for the other place. So he did his best and trusted to Divine mercy; which is religion!

"If they will only let me be a gardener here!" he muttered wistfully, and went down one of the white paths toward a sound of wonderful music. It seemed as if it might be the finished work for which the prelude to "Lohengrin" had been the rough sketch. Strings and strings and quivering

strings. Where there was music there would be people, and where such music and such flowers were, surely the people must be angels.

As he walked on—but he seemed rather to float—he found that some of the masses of flowers were the outer covering of a house. People sat outside under a verandah, the roof and pillars of which were coated with flowers. The people were beautiful and gowned in many-coloured silks. They reclined upon beds of fragrant flowers and wore garlands upon their heads. No doubt they were angels, he told himself. He felt small and despicable facing them, and bowed low before he spoke.

"Excuse me," he said, "but I have only just come here—from earth, if you know where that is. Might I ask the name of this beautiful place?"

A handsome man-angel, lying on a couch of violets, and crowned with lilies—super-lilies—answered him.

"The Garden," he said.

"Can I be a gardener here?" Harrison asked. "I would begin as an under-gardener, of course."

"A gardener?" a lovely woman-angel garlanded with daisies—super-daisies—questioned. "What is that?"

"The man who grows the flowers," Harrison explained.

"But," she cried, "they grow themselves!"

"I mean attend to them," he said, "look after them."

The angels glanced at each other and shook their heads pityingly.

"They don't need any looking after," an angel murmured from a bed of roses—super-roses. All the flowers were far superior to flowers of earth, but Harrison mentally gave them the names of those which feebly resembled them.

"I could take away the weeds," Harrison suggested.

"There are no weeds," said an angel lying on a bank of super-mignonette. Harrison had seen none like it upon earth.

"Water them?" he offered.

"Nature does that," another beflowered angel assured him.

"Then," Harrison asked, "what is my work to be?"

"Work!" several cried at once. "There is no work here!"

Harrison drew a deep breath, and looked round from one to another of the angel people.

"Surely," he protested, "you must work to live!"

"We do not live," a purple-and-gold-clad angel informed him. "We are after that. I think you have come here a little too soon, before you are freed from your last life. When you are, then you will understand."

"What shall I have to do then?" he inquired.

"Do?" an angel-woman queried. "Do? What does he mean?"

"Don't you see," the lily-crowned man-angel protested to him, "there is nothing to 'do.' Doing is an affair of life. This is an after-life garden, a perfect garden. What could you do to perfection? You cannot do anything to improve it, and you must not do anything to impair it."

"Then," he offered, "I will be a soldier, and fight those who try to spoil its perfection."

"Nobody tries to," said the daisy-crowned angel rather wearily. "Will you never understand?"

"But—the fountains? The paths? Don't they ever require 'seeing to'?"

"Of course not," the angel said, laughing faintly.

Harrison considered for a time, then turned to the lily-crowned angel, who, he thought, seemed to understand his points best.

"Do you mean," he asked, "that if I stay here there will be no work for me? Nothing to *do*? Nothing to—to put right?"

"Everything *is* right," the angel told him.

"What more do you want?"

"Well," Harrison said, "you see, sir, I—I have been used to having a good deal to put right. Perhaps you have accounts? There is generally something wrong in *them*. I was an auditor, and—"

"It is only Life which has to account for itself," the angel said. "This is Afterwards. It would be useless to audit perfection, because there are no flaws to find in it. So, if you elect to come to this place—"

"What *is* the place?" Harrison interrupted. "Do you call it Heaven, or—well, it seems to me that a place where you do nothing is rather like—somewhere else."

"I don't think I quite follow you," the angel confessed. "If you are thinking of punishment and reward, you must not take from perfection and you cannot give to it. This is just the Garden, the perfect garden. Of course there are other perfections, and many imperfections. *Those* are all in life. If you prefer them, you will go back there;

but I suppose you wished for this garden, or you wouldn't have come here? You can leave it, you know, if you like, but you must choose now. Doubt cannot remain in perfection."

"You must choose now," all the beflowered angel-men and angel-women told him.

"Choose!" the lily-crowned angel-man commanded in a big voice.

Then all was silent, except the dripping of the fountains, and the soft music which seemed to come from the house. Now it sounded rather like the Venusburg music a thousand times refined. . . . "Come to these bowers, all laden with flowers." . . . And afar, somewhere in the hills, he seemed to hear the chorus of the weary, barefooted pilgrims.

Harrison looked all round him, felt as if the garden held his heart-strings. It was all that he had ever dreamed—much more than that. But to do nothing for ever? To look round and round for a million years, and never find a weed to remove? Or a caterpillar? The flowers wouldn't be *his*. *He* wouldn't grow them. Could not help them; mustn't water them. There would not be even a caterpillar to 'fall short.' What did he remember about that? And about a—something? A someone who ran out to him after that? She was rather like one of the women-angels—not so pretty, but there was something in her face that he liked better than the loveliness of theirs. If he could find *her* . . . He decided to go and look for her in some other garden place.

"I think," he apologised, "I must have come to the wrong garden."

He bowed to the "angels"—if they were that—turned and walked to the pass by which he had entered the garden. At the narrow entrance he looked back, hesitated, sighed, took a step into the garden, and two back, turned sharply and walked fast into the pass.

"I always did things," he muttered. "I must do things. I will do things. That is life. I want life! I want life!"

* * * * *

"Ah," said the great surgeon, "that's better! I was afraid he was sinking, but there's a little reaction now. Life is a kick!"

"Think he'll kick through, sir?" an assistant asked.

"Heaven only knows. If he'll only kick! Life is the will to live, sometimes, Evans!"

* * * * *

When Harrison came out of the pass into the Valley of Choice again, he found the

kind shepherd busy plucking brambles from the coat of a lamb.

"It will be wiser for the pricks," the shepherd said. "That is what God put thorns in life for. Well, friend, couldn't you find the garden?"

"There was nothing to do in it," Harrison told him, "so I didn't stay."

"You thought you didn't want to do anything," the shepherd reminded him, "complained of the labour of life."

"I always used to like plenty to do," Harrison explained. "It—well, it gives an interest to gardening."

"There was plenty to do in the garden that you left," the shepherd said. "Why don't you try to go back to it?"

"Go back to it? Can I? I don't want to return *there*. It was a wretched little garden, sir. No soil to speak of. It had been a builder's dump. My life was rather like that, too, although I think someone helped me with that. If I could remember her properly. . . . I think I might manage a bit of hard gardening again, with her to help me. If I could manage to remember *her*. . . ."

"What," the shepherd asked, "is that in your hand?"

Harrison looked, and found the locket—opened it.

"I'd like to go back to *her*," he owned, "if we could have a decent garden; but I don't feel equal to *that* garden, you see."

"The worse the garden," the shepherd reminded him, "the better chance for gardening!"

"Ye-es," Harrison said. "Ye-es. . . . I don't really feel equal to it, but. . . ." He looked at the locket again. "Perhaps with her to help. . . .? Which is the way to it? I might have a look at the place, and see what I think of it."

"If you want to do that," the shepherd told him, "your garden lies back along the way that you came by. It will be hard to return, but, if you are brave enough, perhaps you can."

"I'll try," Harrison said, and turned away and retraced the way by which he had come. The shepherd raised his hands in blessing.

"Now," he murmured, "he has learnt that there is no life without something to overcome. And my sheep wonder why evil is put into the world!"

* * * * *

Some way down the road by which Harrison had entered the strange country he found a gap between rocks. Looking down

the opening, he saw a stunted little garden and a small house beyond it. He thought that the house was called 4, Myrtle Villas; and, anyhow, there was a 4 upon the front-door. His heart sank and sank as he took stock of the garden. The soil was so stony. The weeds were struggling to come through the path. The plants bore so few blossoms, and these were so poor. . . . It must be his own old garden, that old stubborn garden! His back seemed to ache at the memory of digging and digging and digging, his knees and fingers at the memory of getting out the weeds. And these always came again. His very soul ached at the memory of disappointment whenever he looked at his toil's result. . . .

"No, no!" he cried passionately. "Not this garden! Not *this* garden! I can't stand it. I am too tired! Too tired! I must find something easier than this."

He was turning back to look somewhere else for an easier garden than that which had been allotted to him in life, and then he found the kind shepherd beside him. He had not noticed him come.

"Are you looking for a lost sheep?" he asked. "There is none here."

The shepherd put his hand on his shoulder and grasped it firmly.

"I am looking for a sheep," the shepherd said, "and it is here. It has lost its way for a little while, but I think it will struggle home. . . . So you consider your place in life too hard for you, Richard Harrison? Do you suppose that God would have placed you there if it had been?"

"It was like the garden," Harrison muttered. "Such a stony soil. So many weeds. Sir, I worked and worked at it, but things never 'came off,' never turned out as I hoped. I want something to *do* in life—or death—or wherever I am, but I don't want to go back *there*. I *won't* go back there, if I can help it."

"You can help it," the shepherd said. He pointed to their feet, and Harrison saw a chasm begin to open between them and the garden. "Already the return has become hard and difficult. That is the gulf of time, Harrison—time which no man must neglect. Soon it will be impassable."

"A good job, too," Harrison muttered. "I don't want to go. Someone else can take on the confounded garden."

"Someone else will have to," the shepherd said. "God's work has to be done. If you will not do it, another will—must. See?"

The door of No. 4 opened, and Harrison saw a tired-looking little lady come out. She was not beautiful like the angels in the perfect garden, but somehow she felt "nearer" to him. She carried some gardening tools, and she wore one of his old gardening overalls. It dragged upon the ground, and she called for "Mary" to bring some safety-pins to fasten up the hem.

"Quick, quick, quick!" she cried in the pleasant, impetuous, grown-up-childish way that he remembered, and the maid ran to her with the pins.

"The master is such a big gentleman," the girl laughed. "Fancy *you* in his clothes, ma'am! I'll never make out how you carried him in like you did."

"Here," Harrison cried, "that's Jennie! My wife! And that's my own garden—4, Myrtle Villas. There's the number on the door and on the gate. See? *I* painted that! Sir, it's the most stubborn little beast of a garden that you ever knew. So I can't let *her* do it! I never *do* leave things to her if I can do them myself, you know. What does Mary mean about her carrying me? Was it when I went home ill and fainted?"

"Then," the shepherd said, "and for many years. She has lifted you over all the rough places she could all your married life. Now she is trying to give you an easier garden when you come home. But you did not want to go home, and so——"

He pointed to the chasm at their feet. It had opened into a great stony gully, with rows of thorny bushes running up and down, a gully which Harrison could not leap, and saw no way of passing. He sank down on the ground and seemed to lose himself in despair for a time. . . .

* * * * *

"Chief," the anæsthetist said sharply, "I'm afraid to give him any more."

"Go on," the great surgeon said. "He's got to risk it. There's no other chance. I must finish this. . . . Poor lady in the locket. . . . We can only do our bit. The rest is in other hands."

"In God's hands," the quiet nurse murmured.

"Ah! What do we know? . . . More, Jarvis. . . . A little more. . . . A week sooner, and he'd have been all right. They *will* leave it till they're run down, and Nature is against them instead of for them. If he had kick enough left in his system, he'd

get through, but. . . . Well, we can only do our bit. The rest is in other hands. . . . I've no objection to your saying 'God's hands,' nurse. . . . Now! . . ."

* * * * *

Harrison rose presently and clutched at the shepherd's arm. Somehow he felt sure that the kind shepherd wished to help him.

"I must go to her!" he cried. "Jennie never can get on without me. She often says so. Besides, there are the children. I *must* find *some* way to go home. I might get down by clinging to the bushes, don't you think? Which is the best way?"

"You might manage it along *that* line," the shepherd said, pointing with his staff. "But you will have to cling to thorns. They will cut you."

"Yes!" Harrison said. "Yes! If they must, they must. I'd better go quickly, sir. Thank you! I hope you will find your sheep."

"I always keep on till I find my sheep," the shepherd said. "My blessing upon you!"

He stretched his hands over Harrison, who was in the gully now and letting himself down, holding to the thorn bushes. He was still standing so, Harrison noticed, when he reached a little ledge, where he rested for a few moments to pluck the thorns from his torn hands. He still stood there when Harrison reached the bottom of the ravine and turned round dazedly, wondering which way to go. Then the shepherd pointed with his staff to another long line of bushes, to show him the best track.

"It almost seems," Harrison murmured, "as if he looked upon me as one of his lost sheep! I don't feel as if I can climb it. But if I don't, Jennie will be left with that infernal garden; and she's not too strong—wears her little self out fussing and exciting. . . . I don't think I can do it. . . . It's no use saying 'can't.' *I must!*"

* * * * *

"He's standing it better than I expected," the anæsthetist remarked.

"Perhaps," the little nurse murmured, "the strength is given."

"Given?" muttered the anæsthetist.

"What is all life but something given?" the surgeon asked.

"Yes," said the anæsthetist, "there's that. The power that gives once can give again, of course."

"You mean God," said the little nurse.

"I suppose," he owned, "I do."

The surgeon nodded without looking up.

"I thought you'd come to that. Well, the op.'s all right if the new strength is given."

* * * * *

Harrison struggled and cried out many times, panting up the steep ascent, clinging to the tearing bushes; lay down several times and thought, "This is the end," but always got up and went on again. There was a steep stony piece of rock which he never remembered mounting. He seemed to get over it while he was in a swoon, and fancied—if it was fancy—that the kind shepherd bent down over him and lifted him. Presently he came to the top. He thought that something certainly lifted him on that—lifted him and laid him upon the path of No. 4 Myrtle Villas. There was the number on the door; and it *must* be his old garden. There was no other garden ever which wanted so much done to it. . . . He must begin on his work again, he ordered himself fiercely, or Jennie would have to do it. He tried to tear a weed from the path with his hands, but the garden wheeled round and round him. He tried to call, and presently he thought that a faint, far-off sound came.

"Jennie! Jennie!"

There was no garden, he found, after all, but Jennie was there, sitting beside the hospital bed with her arm under his neck, Jennie, white-faced and wild. It seemed so strange that her hand did not go up to push back the straying hair.

"Dick! Old Dick! God has saved you for me. Thank God! Oh, thank God! You will soon be back to me, and the children, and your tiresome old garden!"

Richard Harrison moved his eyelids and his lips a trifle. It was all that he could do then, but he tried to say that he didn't mind

the garden so long as she and the children were there.

* * * * *

"I shouldn't mention the garden, unless he does," the surgeon advised her, outside afterwards. "I gather that it's rather on his nerves."

"I don't wonder," she said. "It's a garden that nobody but my old Dick would try to make a garden of. You see, he's one of those men who walk faster when they have to toil up a hill."

"Ah," said the surgeon, "but I think he gets a helping arm!"

"Please God!" said his wife. "I'll be sure not to mention the garden."

But next day, when she went to see him, he mentioned it.

"Don't you fag at that blessed garden, old dear," he said. "I know what you are! I shall have a few days home before I go back to the office; and it quite bucks me up to think that there'll be lots to do in it—plenty of weeds to dig up. Good old weeds!"

He laughed and rubbed his hands.

"Isn't that just like old Dick?" she told the doctor. "He always wants to be doing things. But when he comes home the garden won't be *quite* so bad as he expects. I shall do just as much as I can without letting him notice it!"

"And," the doctor said, "isn't that just like you?"

But Harrison noticed his wife's work the very moment that they drove up to the front gate.

"I can see your hand in the garden, Jennie," he said. "God bless you! . . . And in my life. . . . And in my life!"

"It's *our* life," she whispered, "and *our* garden."

They stood looking at it arm-in-arm. Perhaps they looked also at their life. But they did not look afraid. . . .

God prosper their gardening!





THE STARRY NIGHT

By WILFRID THORLEY

OH, brighter than a sickle-blade
The moon is shining! Silver doves
From starry branches serenade
Their heavenly loves.



The Milky Way's a sudden mist
Of wings from a white flock that fills
With star-dust all the air like grist
From heavenly mil's.



And there's a spate and sudden spray
Beneath the flock that wheels and veers,
As though the stream had broke a way
Through heavenly weirs.



Look up and see the sickle! See
The silver doves, the silver stream,
And all the night's immensity
One silver dream!



MANUEL ALONSO IN PLAY.

LAWN TENNIS HINTS

SOME ADVICE ON SPEED OF FOOT, FOOTWORK,
SPEED OF STROKE, EXECUTION OF STROKES,
HARD COURT PLAY, ETC.

By MANUEL ALONSO,

Spanish Champion

Illustrated from action-photographs of Manuel Alonso by Alfieri

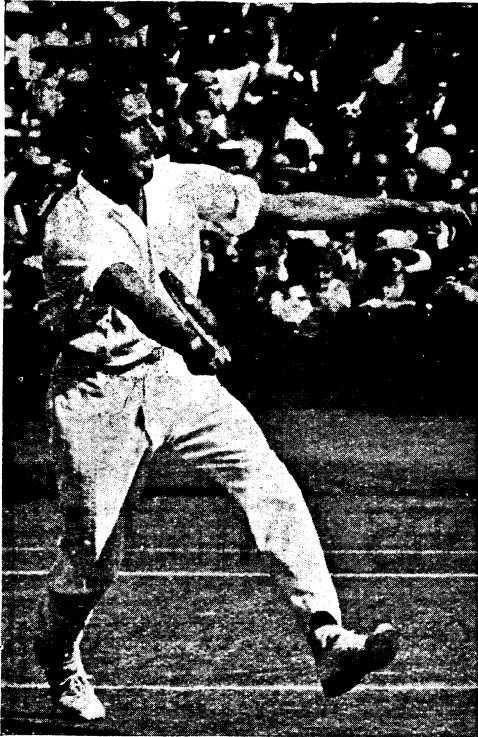
THESE questions have been written about before, so that I do not claim that what I am now going to explain is by any means new, except that it will be the result of what experience of the game has shown me to be the best method to pursue in each case.

What is natural to one cannot, of course, be so to others, and this is where difference in style comes in. However, in what relates to speed, both of foot and also in connection

with the strokes, I think there are factors common to everyone.

When considering speed of foot, it must not be lost sight of that this is intimately connected with anticipation, so much so that I consider it more essential to possess or to cultivate the latter quality than actual speed. The reason for this is that the player has at his disposal a definite time between sending the ball and its being returned to him, so that the time taken by the

player for conveying himself from one position to another will have to be equal to that taken by the ball in the double journey. If the player has no anticipation and, before moving, waits till his opponent hits the ball, he will have wasted half the time at his disposal, and will therefore require twice the speed for covering the same space, the consequence of this being that he will ex-



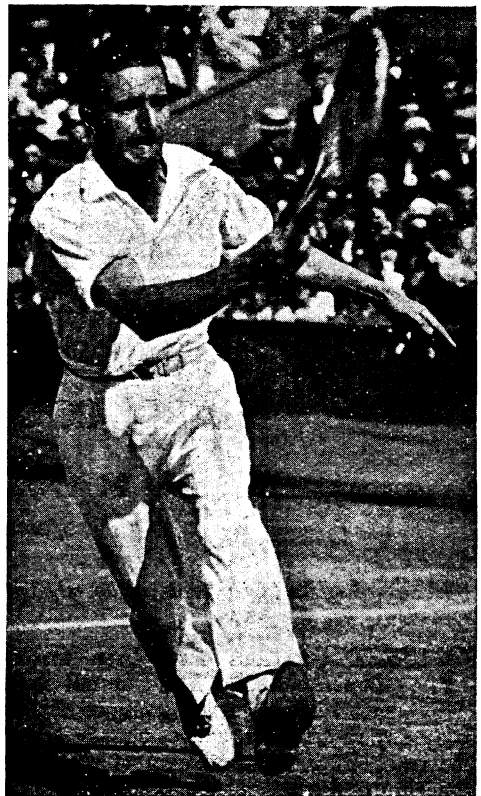
perience fatigue as a result of the enormous effort which he has to make each time.

If, on the contrary, directly he hits the ball he moves in the direction in which he perceives his opponent is going to send it, he will obtain the same result with the minimum amount of effort, so that he will always be in time, and with his feet in proper position for the stroke he proposes to deliver. This does not mean, of course, that he should move conspicuously in a given direction; that would be disastrous, as the opponent might easily deceive him.

There are, of course, balls which can be returned only by speed, such as lobs which have already passed, the shots with which you are caught on the wrong foot, and chops, but even in connection with these strokes excessive speed is frequently the consequence of faulty anticipation.

I am certain to be asked, at this stage, how to obtain this anticipation. To this I am unable to give any reply. I think that it is a matter of pure intuition on the part of the player at the outset, and that it is only by getting experience of the game that you succeed in acquiring it. It depends upon the kind of stroke which has just been delivered and upon what, at that moment, makes your position appear most unfavourable, as there is a certain percentage of probability that the opponent will have noticed this wrong position of yours, and met the point by placing the ball there.

My advice is to keep your eyes constantly on your opponent's feet and racket before returning a shot. After a few games you get to know the preliminary movement made by him for sending the ball, and the particular position of his feet for doing this.



THE FOLLOW THROUGH OF A FOREHAND DRIVE.

A proof of the importance of anticipation is furnished to us every day by players whose powers have declined, but who hit

unlikely balls which a new player can manage to hit only by dint of speed, the former accomplishing this entirely from the habit of anticipation which the experience of the game has given them.

Speed in the courts is a thing which anyone can have if he sets himself to acquire it. It does not consist in running about like mad from one side to another and needlessly tiring yourself; it is the maximum effort applied at the right moment. The first thing to possess is a good rapid start—there lies the secret of speed. There must also be co-ordination of the eyes with the greatest possible effort within the shortest possible time. There is no need, in running, to take long steps if short ones are better for enabling one to stop quickly with one's feet in the correct position.

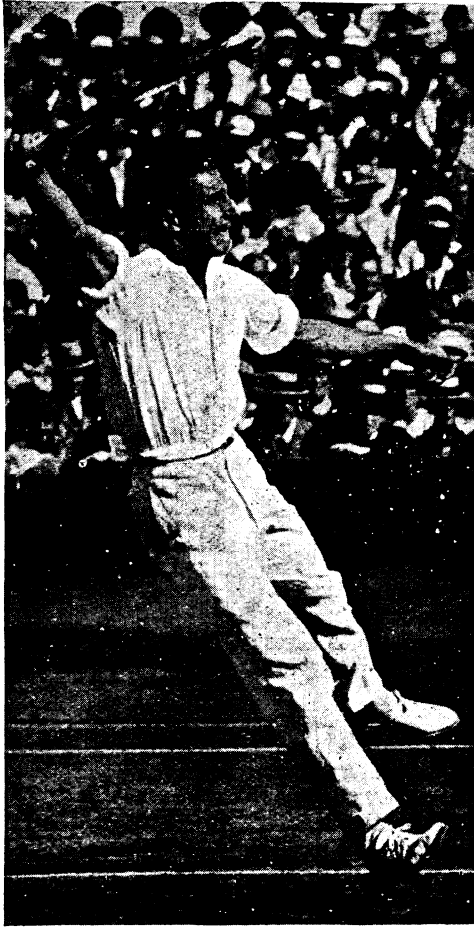
As a good training for acquiring speed in the courts I recommend practising 100-metres walks, not running. Jumping is very good and so is knee-bending. I advise wearing thick socks with light shoes which fit the feet closely.

Notwithstanding its being a thing for which many have criticised me, I recommend running up to any ball, however impossible it may appear. Till you have done this you get no idea of the number of points which are made in this manner, nor how much your opponent's *morale* is affected by it. If he is an impressionable player, and finds that a ball which he had considered a point has been returned to him, he will end by losing his head and not know where to send his balls, because it will seem to him that, wherever they go, they are sure to be returned. This has the drawback of

requiring a great amount of training in order to be able to last five sets. In the long run, however, you get used to it, and I can assure you that it is a quality which has brought me nothing but advantage.

This is what experience has taught me in regard to speed. I would, however, recommend that greater importance should be attached to anticipation than to actual speed, and would advise trying by all possible means to acquire this highly-important quality.

Concerning footwork, everybody agrees on this point: the position of the feet for each stroke and the distribution of the weight of the body on the feet are common to all styles and to every stroke, so that there is no interest in saying more about this than what I recommend should be done for the execution of each stroke. For instance, for the drive the left foot should come more forward than the right, the whole weight of the body resting on it, in order to counterbalance the reaction produced by the impact of the ball with the racket. In the backhand stroke the stance is exactly the opposite. The right foot is advanced, and the weight of the body rests on it. For smash service, the



THE FINISH OF AN OVERHEAD SMASH.

weight should be on the left foot, and the same for forehand volleys. In this question of volleys it is very difficult to fix rules for placing the feet. These strokes are generally delivered in the most absurd postures, as the movement is so rapid that it must be realised that there is often no time to think of the position of the feet at that given moment.

Great importance should be attached to footwork. It is the base on which the whole

body has to rest for the proper delivery of shots, and it will be readily understood that it would be difficult to produce them with security if that base is not properly established and if the body is not perfectly balanced. In order to accustom yourself to acquire a good stance instinctively, I recommend great importance being attached to this point when training—that is to say, to making quite sure that, when delivering a drive, the left foot is in a forward position, with the weight of the whole body resting on it, till no feeling of any weight whatever is experienced on the right foot. By constantly repeating this position you gradually acquire a perfect stance for each stroke, and this becomes so automatic that you never give any thought as to whether your feet are properly placed or not.

The players who have attracted my attention more than any others, on account of the perfection of their footwork, are Mlle. Lenglen and the American players. Suzanne, more particularly, is perfection as regards this point, and it is on that account that her movements are so elegant, and that there is such perfect rhythm in the production of her strokes in consequence of the perfect balance of her body, so that even the most difficult strokes appear simple and easy to imitate.

On the subject of execution of strokes there is no agreement between any two players; it changes with the style peculiar to each, and to each the system which gives him the best results appears the one which cannot be improved upon.

The first thing which has to be explained, in order to make this point clear, is the way in which the racket should be held, and here another question confronts us: shall it be held in one position for all strokes, or is it a matter of no importance to hold it in one way for the drive and in another for the backhand stroke, for service, volleys, etc.?

I think that one should have one grip; you are thus ready for any kind of shot which you have to deliver, whereas if you change your grip, the speed of the ball may be such that you have not time to change the position of the racket. All the same, I do not think that there is any objection to changing the grip for a backhand stroke and a drive when playing in the base line, provided you have one grip only for backhand and forehand volleys, for the smash and for service. The speed of the game allows of changing the position of the racket when you are playing from the back of the court.



A LOW FOREHAND VOLLEY.

There is then sufficient time to judge where the ball is coming, and to get the racket ready for either hitting it forehand or backhand. In the net game, however, when the ball may at any moment come either side, and in so short a time that after scarcely leaving the opponent's racket it is already over, it is not possible to play with different grips; there must be one only which will allow of delivering a forehand stroke or a backhand stroke or a smash.

The execution of a stroke depends upon the particular manner which each player has for holding his racket. It may be said that there are no two persons who deliver strokes in the same way. Although two may have the same grip, they will not have the same way of producing the stroke. Apart from footwork, which, as I have already stated, is common to everybody, the technical execution of a stroke varies considerably. There is a natural tendency nowadays to hit the ball when it is at the highest point of its flight after bouncing. This has enormous advantages, as it increases the

speed of the game without the necessity of increasing the power required for producing the stroke. If, moreover, you hit the ball when it is higher than the net, the trajectory will only be a downward one, whereas if you wait for it to go lower, you have to get it to rise in order to go over the net and remain longer in the air, thus reducing the speed of the game, besides which more power is required for hitting the ball, and this has the drawback of reducing the certainty of the stroke and causing more fatigue.

The top spin greatly assists in this manner of playing, if the ball, being at a greater height than the net, is hit in such a way that the racket is at a sharp angle with the surface of the court, and by sending it

upwards from below, a spin is imparted to it, which causes it to come down sooner than if it had been hit, under the same conditions, with the flat racket. This spin imparts to it greater speed on bouncing and causes it to come down sooner. The harder it is hit, the greater will be the spin imparted to it, and the smaller is the probability of its going outside.

This is the drive as delivered by me : it is a movement of the whole arm, until the moment of the impact of the ball, in which the wrist is quickly turned to give it more top spin.

The grip for the drive is as follows : with the arm forward, the racket must be held quite flat. The fingers should lie close to one another, with the little finger on the leather of the handle end. It is not only the arm movement ; you must help with the upper part of the body at the moment of hitting. Endeavour to be away from the ball, with the left foot forward, with the point turned in, and the weight of the body on that foot and the left side of the body facing the net.

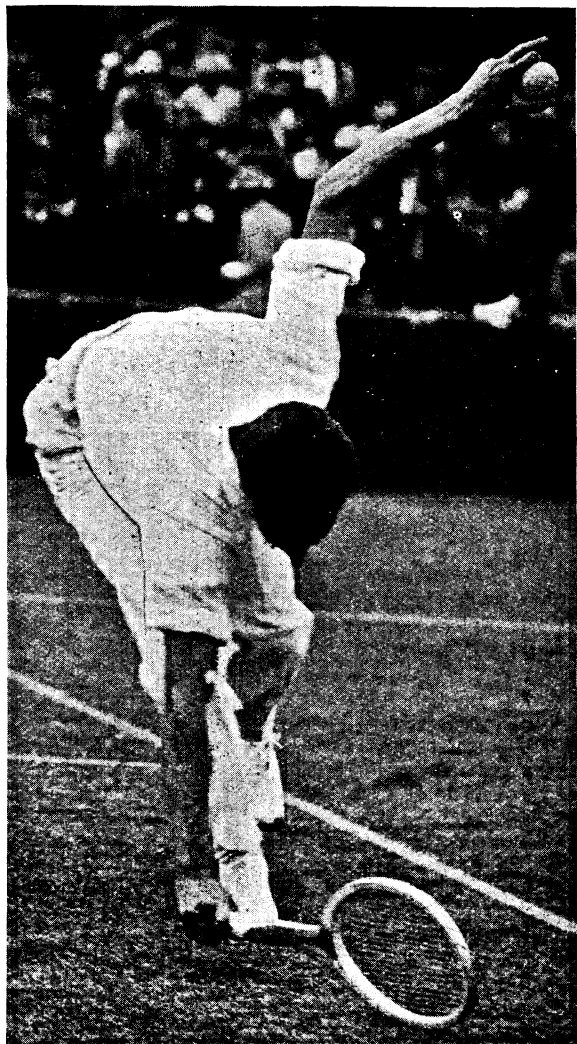
For the backhand stroke I change the grip entirely, so that, with the arm in the same position as before, the edge of the racket alone must be seen. The fingers are then separated and the thumb lying alongside the handle.

In this stroke I give no top spin ; I wait for the ball, and then, with the body sideways to the net and with the right foot advanced and the racket held further back, I deliver the stroke, bringing the whole arm forward and taking care to hold the head of the racket always higher than the wrist.

The arm should not relax at once after hitting the ball. It is better to follow up the movement—in short, “to follow through.”

The wrist, rigid at the beginning, should be slightly turned back at the end ; at the moment of striking the ball you must assist with the waist, turning the body to accompany the movement of the arm.

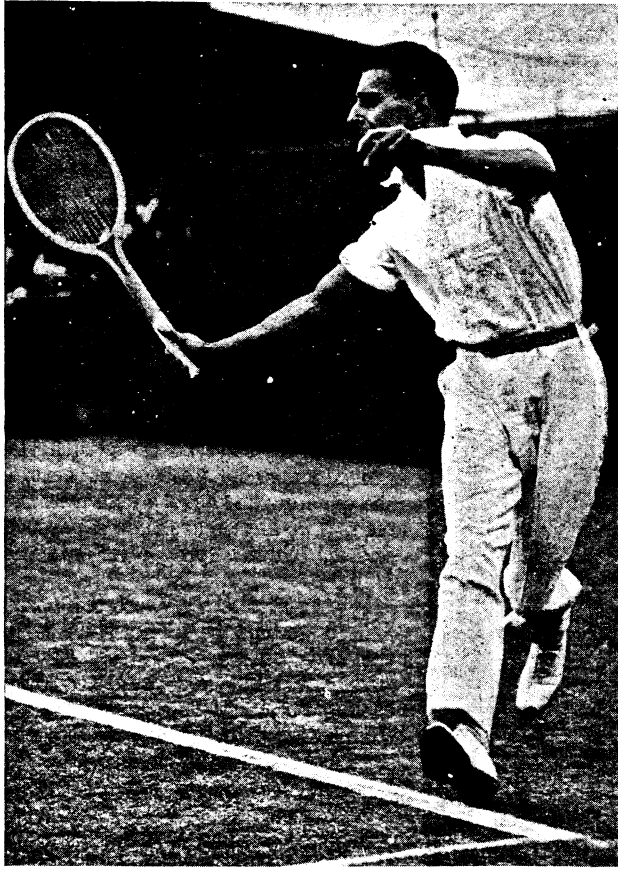
In this way the backhand stroke is delivered without any spin whatever, as the ball is hit with the racket held perfectly flat. If the head of the racket is allowed to drop below the wrist, the ball will leave



ANOTHER LOW FOREHAND VOLLEY.

the racket with a side spin and easily go out, and it will be difficult to impart to it the desired direction.

For volleys and for the smash I have the same grip as for the backhand stroke; backhand volleys I deliver with exactly the same grip, from the back of the court. The forehand volley is quite different from my drive. The racket moves downward from above, and forward from behind, with the head held



THE GRIP FOR A BACKHAND STROKE.

higher than the wrist. The ball leaves with undercut, whereas in the drive it leaves with top spin, which is just the contrary.

In the smash the secret is to wait well for the ball. Most failures are due to hitting too soon or too late; if you wait too long for the ball, you hit it too low, with the result that it probably goes out, whereas, if, on the contrary, you hit it before the proper time, the stroke is delivered with the top of the racket, and the smash results in the ball going into the net.

C. W. Lockyer, the tennis instructor whom we had in Madrid for four years, coached me for the smash, calling to me when to make for the ball. He used to stand by my side whilst they were sending me lobbs, and when he said "Now!" I hit the ball. The consequence of this was that I succeeded in automatically measuring the time of hitting the ball, so that the smash would come off with the utmost efficiency. Another difficulty in the smash consists in the position of the body in relation to the ball; for this I stand in such a position that, were I not to hit the ball, it would fall over on my right shoulder or a little further. This is when dealing with high lobbs hit from the middle of the court.

I consider that the smash is one of the most difficult strokes, because no end of circumstances exist in connection with it, more than with any other stroke, by which it can be influenced. The wind affects a ball more when it comes over high, and has barely any initial velocity, than it does a drive which comes animated with so much speed that the influence of the wind is comparatively slight and diverts it less. The light, which as regards the rest of the game is fixed, owing to the ball projecting itself on the constant background of the court, is variable for the smash, and only on a cloudless sky can you say the background is invariable for this stroke.

Of late years the speed of the game has become so great that it has to be treated as a truly athletic matter to be able to contend with the violence of play now prevailing. It is not that the power used for each stroke is greater; it is the speed of the footwork, with the anticipation and taking of the ball in the first part of its return flight, which has made the speed of the game so much greater. If you want speed, your anticipation must be good.

In order to cope with the speed of the present game, there is nothing for it but to endeavour to increase the speed of your own play, for which reason the old game from the back of the court is gradually disappearing,

owing to the inability of competing in that way with a rapid player, since the great speed of the latter's play gets the opponent out of place, and a placed ball is then sufficient to finish the point. You must nowadays dominate the ball, since it is the means of efficiently counteracting rapid playing.

It is this which has most attracted my attention in American players; they prepare the point from the back of the court. Not with merely defensive play, however, but attacking constantly, and when they come down to the net, such is the dominion which they have of the volley that the one they hit is a sure point. There is nothing for it but to resort to an attacking game against them and to endeavour to get to the net before they do.



which is most difficult to arrest, as your ball is apt to skid without bouncing, and it is practically impossible to play a rapid game against players of this description.

The diversity of styles is enormous. The tactics resorted to, however, are the same



TWO SPECIMENS OF LOW BACKHAND VOLLEY ACTION.

—to get to the net and attack. Some attack with powerful drives, others with chopped drives, but all of them seek a propitious occasion for getting to the net and “killing” from there; they do not make the point from the back of the court; there are no base-line players; all dominate the volley and play it well.

Another matter for surprise is the number of young players the Americans have; they take boys showing aptitude for the game and train them, and it often happens that the final of a championship of boys less than sixteen years of age is a real lesson in tactics and style.

They realise the importance which the boy of to-day has for the future, and do all they can to teach him well from the very beginning. Over there a boy does not look down upon tennis as is the case in Europe; they are keener than their seniors, and

The “chopped game,” which is not much considered in Europe, is very much used over there. There are players who resort to it constantly, and who do this with mathematical precision. It is a kind of game

appreciate the athletic value which it actually possesses.

In Europe boys prefer to play football and cricket, and consider tennis a not very manly game. I do not think that the fault in regard to so great an error is theirs ; it is the lack of interest on the part of the grown-up people, who make no effort to open their eyes and convince them that their idea is entirely wrong, and that a first-class tennis player is as much an athlete and as manly as the captain of an international football team or the winner of the Marathon race.

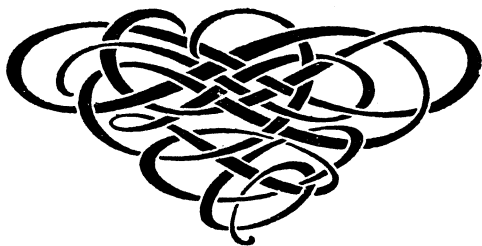
It seems as if the game on hard courts were becoming general, and this is bound to happen. Of all the nations which play tennis, only England, the Eastern States of North America, and Australia, have grass courts, whereas in the whole of the remainder of the world they play on hard courts or on cement. Unless grass is in perfect condition, playing on it is only fraught with drawbacks ; a player cannot be sure of the bounce of the ball, from which it results that he has to wait and see what kind of bounce there will be, so that he cannot deliver his stroke. This reduces the speed and precision, and produces a slow player without any attack, who does not know beforehand the kind of stroke he is going to deliver, since he has

to wait and see how the bounce of the ball is going to turn out.

On hard courts you can always rely upon a good bounce, and you can acquire the art of holding your racket automatically at the precise height, and can think your stroke out safely beforehand and deliver it in the most satisfactory manner, since you can always rely on a regular bounce.

A grass court is ideal, like the Centre Court at Wimbledon and the Forest Hills, Boston, and Philadelphia Courts of America, possessing all the advantages and none of the disadvantages of hard courts, being restful for the feet and to the eyes. Compare, however, the number of players who are able to play there with the infinitely larger number of those who play on unsatisfactory grass courts under unsatisfactory conditions.

Over here in Spain we play on hard courts only ; perhaps this is the reason why we consider them the most perfect of surfaces. But I think it is the general preference which goes on increasing their number, and that they will eventually replace most of the unsatisfactory grass courts, where players cannot acquire either the speed or the precision which are the characteristic features of modern lawn tennis.



SINCE I AM YOUNG

WHEN I am old I shall say bitter things
If any talk of caring unto me,
Forgetful of my beautiful sped Springs,
And my sweet moons, and you especially.

I shall make mock of loving and be wise,
And go in my tranquillity along.
But ah ! since I am young, I will arise
And fashion you a little foolish song.

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.

VALERIE FRENCH

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "Anthony Lyveden," "Berry and Co.," "Jonah and Co.,"

"The Brother of Daphne," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.—The great woodland estate of Gramarye was on fire, but nobody cared, for the owner, Colonel Winchester, was in a madhouse, to which local opinion held that he had been driven by some malign influence in this wilderness of a property. The mental breakdown of Anthony Lyveden while working for him was ascribed to the same cause. From a spur of the Cotswolds a man looked down upon the holocaust, but cared no more than anyone else, for he had lost his memory. Sitting at his feet was a small dog for whose presence he could not account, and both were in the last stage of exhaustion when found and given a lift to the next village. After bestowing upon himself and the Sealyham the names of "Jonathan" and "Hamlet," in his inability to remember even his own name, Anthony Lyveden set forth to seek his fortune. About this time Lady Touchstone wrote to her kinsman, Cardinal Forest, "Poor Anthony Lyveden's body was found a fortnight ago. We had him buried at Girdle." She was referring to the search for Anthony, who had disappeared, and to the discovery of a dead body assumed to be his. She had gone abroad with her grief-stricken niece, Valerie French, who had been engaged to be married to Anthony, and at Dinard they made the acquaintance of an English girl, André Strongith'arm—the *fiancée* of Colonel Winchester—who gave Valerie a profoundly moving account of Anthony's life and work at Gramarye, and of the baleful influence of the place upon his brain. A day later André was recalled to England by the news of Colonel Winchester's sudden recovery. Meantime Anthony Lyveden and his dog fell in with Sir Andrew Plague, K.C., upon the Oxford Road, and by this chance encounter Anthony made for himself a friend indeed. Rough and hot-tempered, but kindly, the famous lawyer took a liking to "Jonathan Wood," and, when he learned that, having lost all memory of his own identity, he was beginning life again, engaged him as his secretary. André had been deeply in love with Anthony, but without awakening any response from him; now, however, that he was apparently dead, she determined to try to forget the matter and devote herself to her *fiancé*, Richard Winchester. At the latter's first meeting with her new friend, Valerie, he astounded the two girls by casually remarking that from a cab in Fleet Street he had just seen Anthony Lyveden, only to lose him again among the byways of the Temple. To the answer, "But he's dead! He's buried at Girdle," Winchester replied, "Nonsense! I'd know him anywhere. Besides, he had his dog with him—a Sealyham, with a big, black patch on his back." Then Sir Andrew met Lady Touchstone, and, after a little, Anthony and Valerie met. He did not remember her, and she would not tell him that they had been engaged, but the moment he saw her he loved her with all his heart. The next day he *recognised* André, riding alone. He remembered her and recalled distinctly that there had been something between them; but that was all. Nervously he accosted her, and from her manner and speech, no less than from the fact that she alone had waked his memory, made sure that when he disappeared he had been pledged to her. As for André, knowing nothing of his loss of memory, she read in his demeanour a declaration of love. Anthony visited Valerie immediately and asked why she had not told him that he was engaged. "Because," replied Valerie, "I wanted you to think you were free." Whereupon, to her dismay, Anthony turned on his heel and walked out of the house. Valerie fled to Bell Hammer, her country house, while André wired to Anthony to meet her next day in the Row. Sir Andrew intercepted the telegram and, suspecting that the sender was at the bottom of the trouble between his secretary and Valerie French, determined to keep the appointment in Anthony's stead. Accordingly, the next morning, he interviewed André in the Row. After a furious scene, André was convinced of her error and Anthony told of his engagement to Valerie French. He instantly went to Bell Hammer and told her his tale. But, when she learned that he had remembered André, she felt cold and shaken. And though she presently consented to marry him when he remembered her, her yearning for his old love was so insistent that she could hardly endure any expression of the new.

VIII. STRAIGHT STREET.

THE limousine sailed into the summer evening, leaving a long wash of dust to mark her passage. The cooler air suited her admirably, and there was now an effortless elasticity about her movements which set the cap of Drowsiness upon her passenger's head and then pulled it down over his eyes. This was as well, for the latter was worn out. Long ere the car reached Basingstoke, Anthony Lyveden was asleep.

The car sailed on.

Soon, with her peculiar magic, sundown set everything afire. Streams ran with golden water: meadows and dells were full of crimson light: pinewoods became the very gates of glory—peering between their bars, you saw the promise of another world: moors glowed and smouldered: peeping windows and weathercocks burst into flame: while the road itself curled in and out of sudden dusk and splendour, flashed between laughing hedgerows, dropped into sober bottoms and, now and again, swung over a

solemn shoulder to march beside the pageant for a fantastic mile.

Sleeping steadily, Anthony saw none of these things. Indeed, he was deep in London before he waked, greatly refreshed and astonished that he had slumbered so long. He decided gratefully that if Nature was a good doctor, the chauffeur was an excellent nurse, and had more cause for gratitude than he imagined. If the heat of the day was over, not so its burden.

The journey was finished, Kensington Palace Gardens had been won, and Lyveden, who had just alighted, was in the act of thanking the chauffeur before he entered the house, when a taxi flung up the drive and, skidding with locked wheels to within six inches of the limousine's off fore wing, discharged its frantic passenger into an atmosphere of speechless indignation.

André Strongi's arm.

The girl flashed to the steps and seized Anthony by the arm.

"Quick!" she panted, haling him to the door. "Quick! Richard's inside. Richard—the man I'm engaged to. He's like a madman. He wouldn't hear me out, and he swore he'd thrash Plague till he couldn't stand. I tried to stop him, but he threw me across the room and locked the door."

With a shaking hand Anthony rammed the key home. . . .

As the door yielded, a burst of passionate altercation assailed their ears. Then came a screech of fury, the sharp smack of a fist, the snarling worry of a dog, and the crash of a mighty weight meeting the floor.

Anthony hurled himself across the hall. . . .

An instant later the library's door was open, and the two were inside.

A man was standing straight in the middle of the room—a proud, tremendous figure, with a fair, close-cut beard, thoughtfully pulling his moustache. His bearing, physique, and style were those of a ruler of men. Ears back, teeth bared, one paw raised, Patch stood at his feet, bristling with hatred, snarling up into his face—no empty threat, as the trickle of blood upon the great wrist argued. The man, however, did not appear to notice him. He was looking beyond at Sir Andrew, who, with a cut and swelling lip and one leg obviously out of action, was making violent but ineffectual endeavours to get upon his feet.

As Anthony entered, Sir Andrew beckoned him.

"Help me up," he said thickly. "Don't

stand there gaping, you fool. I've hurt my knee. Help me up. He's struck me, and I'm going to break his back."

The stranger turned.

"Ah, Lyveden," he said lightly. "I'm glad to see you." He jerked his head at Plague. "Do as he says," he added. "I haven't thrashed him yet."

André flung herself upon his arm.

"Richard, Richard," she cried, "listen to me! If ever a man did you and me a good turn, it's that man there. You know me well enough. I don't beg anyone's pardon without good cause. Yet I apologised to him because—"

"Don't make it worse," said Winchester, setting her gently aside. Then he took a whip from the table. "Out of the way, Lyveden!"

Anthony, who had helped Sir Andrew to his feet and then treacherously pushed him into a convenient chair, took no notice at all. Indeed, he had his hands full. The knight was beside himself with fury. That the man who struck him was alive was bad enough: that his familiar friend should be preserving the man's life sent him almost out of his mind. He fought and raved fearfully. The chair, however, was deep, and Anthony was behind, with his hands on his shoulders. Sir Andrew could not have risen to save his life.

"Lyveden," said Winchester again, "let him get up."

Anthony looked him in the face.

"One at a time," he said quietly. "You must deal with me first. And after you've dealt with me, you shall deal with him."

"Don't be a fool," said the other; "I've no quarrel with you."

"You have," said Anthony. "But, if you'll leave this house, I'll let that go."

Winchester frowned, and Sir Andrew stopped struggling, screwed his head round and peered into Anthony's face.

After a little—

"I understand," said Winchester, "that you've lost your memory. If you hadn't, you would remember that I mean what I say. That gentleman there"—he pointed contemptuously to Plague—"has got to go through the hoop. If you like to postpone his chastisement for so long as it takes me to knock you out, I can't prevent you. But it seems a futile proceeding. It won't profit him and it'll damage you."

Anthony laughed.

"Since you knew me," he said, "I've grown whimsical." He looked down at his

patron. "If I take my hands from your shoulders, sir, will you stay still where you are?"

"No," roared Sir Andrew, "I won't! This is my show. The blackguard struck me, and I'll knock his face through his head."

"Afterwards, sir, afterwards. Let me——"

"I won't!" raged the knight. "I WON'T! Lemme get up, you hound!" He surged in the chair impotently. "Blast you, *lemme get up!*"

"Not till you promise to let me have first go."

The paroxysm of rage which this definite defiance provoked was truly frightful. Sir Andrew's complexion rapidly assumed the colour of a damson plum. That one or more blood-vessels must burst seemed to be beyond doubt. His secretary clung to his shoulders as a helmsman clings to a wheel in heavy weather. At last, however, the tempest blew itself out.

"All right," said Sir Andrew thickly. "An' if you don't kill him, I will. An' I'll kill you, any way," he added violently.

Anthony took out a handkerchief and wiped his face.

Then he stepped forward, smiling.

"Put down that whip," he said.

André was clinging to his arm.

"Stop, stop, Anthony! You're mad. You can't touch him. He's twice your weight, and—Richard"—she swung about—"but for these two men here, your life and mine would have been broken up. Is this your payment? Is this——"

"André," said Winchester shortly, "I've heard enough. With motives I'm not concerned. They may have been most worthy. So are the motives of the carter who breaks his horse's back. The gentleman sitting in the chair has to be taught manners"—Sir Andrew began to make a rattling noise—"has to be made to understand that, if he must bully, he should bully men. As for Lyveden, his blood's on his own fool's head. If he can't remember, I should think he could see that I'm the wrong man to cross."

"And I," said André quietly, "am the wrong woman. Give me that whip." Winchester hesitated, staring, and the girl took it out of his hand. "You prate to me of manners. Look to your own." She turned on Lyveden and Plague. "And you—and you. You rotten crowd of wasters, where were you bred? Howling and slogging each other in front of me. I'm not a drab from

the slums. I don't want to witness your beastly instincts. For ten solid minutes I've stood here, in this room, and been dishonoured. If I'd liked to scream, I could have had half Kensington here. But you all knew I wouldn't do that, because I should pay more dearly than any of you. So you banked on my not screaming. My teeth were drawn, and that was all that mattered. That I was alone—a woman, that I might be scared—revolted, didn't affect the case. And I am revolted. I feel literally sick. As men go, I'd thought you three weren't bad. I was wrong. You're as cheap and rank a bunch as ever I saw. There's nothing to choose between the lot of you. You're just trash: and I hope to Heaven I never see any of you again!"

For a full minute nobody seemed to breathe.

Then—

"I beg your pardon," said Anthony.

"Beg," said André, and cut him across the face.

The dog leaped at her hand, but Lyveden struck him aside and had him fast before he could leap again.

In dead silence the girl stepped to the door, opened it, and passed out.

As she crossed the hall, the chauffeur, butler, and footmen tried to make themselves scarce. They might have spared their pains. She never noticed them.

She opened the front door and left the house.

As she passed down the drive, she began to sob.

"It was the only way," she moaned, as one who has sold one treasure to save another. "The only way—to make sure. Richard won't touch him now."

This was quite true.

After an awkward silence, Winchester shook hands with Lyveden, humbly apologised to Plague, and went his way.

There was no more spirit in him. André had spiked his guns.

* * * * *

No one of those who, upon that memorable evening, assisted to transport the K.C. from his library to his bedroom will ever forget the episode. It would have lived, any way: but the invective alone, with which, as with some preserving chemical, their burden sprayed their travail, assured its incorruption.

The scene was Homeric, worthy of the Gobelins. No mere paint-brush could have caught the tremendous atmosphere.

Between them, Anthony and four servants bore the injured giant as retainers their wounded lord. A feature of the exploit, more embarrassing than traditional, was the lord's active interest in the operation. From force of habit, the latter directed his removal and constantly endeavoured, during

his master was depending for support in his adventure.

The steward hovered, vulture-like, about the procession, with smelling-salts and brandy. The Sealyham made an excited and distracting escort, barking until all present, except Sir Andrew, prayed for



“ ‘Out of the way, Lyveden!’ ”

its progress, physically to correct and punish any failure to appreciate his commands. His frantic efforts, for instance, to reach the butler, who had hold of his right foot, in order to inflict upon him grievous bodily harm, threw everything into confusion—particularly the chauffeur, upon whose face

death, circling dizzily about the *cortège* in the open and settling down as an obstructive flank-guard when the Narrows were reached. Indeed, the ascent of the staircase stood out of the epic a patch of true purple. The steward was given notice at the foot: the footmen were sacked before the turn was

made: Anthony and the butler succumbed in the course of the turning operation, and the chauffeur, who thought there was one more step than in fact there was, was charged to destroy himself that night.

Finally the bed-chamber was won: the valet offered up a short prayer: the bearers withdrew, and Anthony descended, sweating, to summon a doctor.

you to—to the Marble Harch, sir, if you'd permit it."

"Heaven forbid!" said his master.

"Oh, without doubt, sir," said the steward piously. "But——"

"I shall dine in this room," said Sir Andrew. "So will Major Lyveden. Good night."

"Good night, sir."



"Anthony . . . took no notice at all. Indeed, he had his hands full."

As the steward closed the door, Sir Andrew called him back and held out a five-pound note.

"You and your gang have earned it," he said grimly.

The steward bowed.

"If you please, sir, I'd—we'd rather not. I only speak for the others, sir, when I say that we couldn't think of it. Not that we aren't most grateful, but there isn't one of us, sir, as wouldn't be proud to carry

The doctor came and was reviled. Finding the knee sprained, he prescribed a recumbent position for seven days, and was instantly desired to go to hell for seven years. As he left the room a glass was thrown at him.

At last dinner was served.

Anthony was rent and cross-examined and rent again. Finally he was ordered to ring up Lady Touchstone and invite her to lunch the next day.

"Say it's important, and say you won't

be here. Say I fell off the terrace and can't come to her. Ask what she'd like to eat. Above all, say nothing about this evening's business."

"Very good, sir."

Five minutes later he reported that the lady would come, was deeply concerned, would like an omelet, some stewed fruit, and cheese straws, hoped very much that Sir Andrew would pass a good night.

The knight stared at the Sealyham, slumbering upon his bed.

"A discerning woman," he said. "And a better friend to you and your runaway girl than either of you deserve."

Anthony hesitated. Then—

"You make me a little uneasy," he said slowly. "What are you going to say to Lady Touchstone?"

"What's that to do with you?"

"I don't know," said Lyveden. "That's just why I'm uneasy. You see, she's Valerie's aunt. And I couldn't bear Valerie to think that I was—wire-pulling."

"If she knows you at all, she knows you're too much of a fool," said Sir Andrew shortly. "Knives pull wires—not fools." He yawned and rang the bell by the side of his bed. "Good night."

"Good night, sir," replied his secretary, picking up Patch.

"And, for the love of Heaven, don't go out in the Park to-morrow morning."

That Sir Andrew Plague, misogynist, steadfast disbeliever in romance, should have been plunged into the very surf of a passionate affair, sucked underneath, spued up, drawn back, and then sent sprawling into the backset, was arguing Fate's belief in a rod for the fool's back. That he should have been selected to harness these turbulent breakers was Fate's idea of a joke. That, having harnessed them, he was not satisfied, but felt unaccountably impelled to still their fret, was due to Lady Touchstone alone.

Cherchez la femme.

When a man who hates women and despises love interferes on behalf of a lover and gets knocked out for his pains, it might be thought that he would kick himself with great violence, rend the particular lover, and repair to some far country where women are not allowed. Not so Sir Andrew. In the first place, he could not kick himself because the condition of his injured knee put any attempt at gymnastics out of the question. As we know, he rent Anthony; but that was not so much because he was the lover as because Colonel Winchester was

yet alive. Finally, he did not leave London, because a searching cross-examination of his secretary concerning the latter's relations with Valerie French had revealed that his work was not over. The 'work' of course, was nothing but a labour of love.

La femme came to lunch the next day and, having eaten and drunk, listened politely to the knight's account of his mishap. When he had finished, she observed gently enough that a man lying to a woman always reminded her of an amateur teaching a professional his job.

"Not that you're not quite good," explained her ladyship. "As one who knows, I think you shape very well. Your falsehood handicap would be about fourteen. But I'm about plus five. All women are. It's a gift, of course. We're just born liars. Never mind. I'm not a bit curious. How did Anthony get on?"

Sir Andrew breathed very hard.

At length—

"From what I can gather," he said, "your niece sees fit to regret his loss of memory. Why the devil she should pass my comprehension. It's nothing to do with her. And, needless to say, she hasn't a leg to stand on. His present defect doesn't affect the contract. Mentally and physically the man's perfectly sound. But apparently she finds it inconvenient. Very well. Assuming she's sane, there must be something she wishes Major Lyveden to remember."

Lady Touchstone frowned.

"She probably wishes," she said, "that he remembered her."

Sir Andrew stared.

"I daresay she does," he snorted. "I wish that I could forget my age. But I don't let the fact that I can't interfere with my appetite. I repeat that, assuming she's sane, there must be something she wishes Major Lyveden to recall."

"And I," said Lady Touchstone, "repeat that that 'something' is Valerie French. And, while I remember it, what delicious bread you gave me! It's perfectly clear that your baker sleeps in the house. And I'm not surprised that misfortunes don't spoil your appetite. It'd take a great deal to spoil mine if I kept a table like yours. Is it a he?"

"I believe," said the knight, "it's a woman. Happily for us both, I've never seen her; but when the Census was taken, her sex appeared on some paper I had to sign. We get on very well. I pay her as

she likes to be paid, and she feeds me as I like to be fed. But to return to your niece. Why does she make this ridiculous stipulation?"

"Does she?"

"That's what it amounts to. Lyveden's a fool, of course. If he wasn't, he'd snuff it out. But, so far as marriage is concerned, his mind's diseased. Instead of demanding performance, he desires to gratify her whim. He recognises this caprice, dignifies it, confers upon it the rank of a condition—a condition precedent."

"Has he said so?"

"Virtually. He fenced, of course, but his—er—his handicap's about forty-five."

Lady Touchstone laughed. Then she knitted her brow.

"Don't think too hardly of Valerie, and don't despise her squire. They're a remarkable pair. Anthony's desperately honest, and his judgment is sound. Valerie I want you to meet. She's not only astoundingly lovely, but she has a clearer brain than almost any woman I've ever known. As for her honesty—well, she's a glaring exception to the rule. Her handicap is about the same as yours. They've both suffered most heavily by no fault of their own. They were made for each other, and if they were parted to-morrow for good and all, neither the one nor the other would ever so much as look upon anyone else. I know you mock at love, so I won't refer to it again, but I tell you we're dealing here with something which is above contracts, which no man-made canons can touch. Two perfect, gentle specimens of the human race have been brought together: as one who is interested in humanity, surely you must desire their permanent union."

"Madam," replied Sir Andrew, speaking with considerable warmth, "I do nothing of the sort. But for the fact that a marriage has been arranged, I should seek to prevent my secretary from committing an unwarrantable act of folly which he will live to regret. Since, however, the bargain has already been struck, I am ready to do what I can to compass its execution."

"Your choice of words," said Lady Touchstone, "suggests a hideous comparison. I believe you think all marriages should be solemnised upon the scaffold, and that, when sentence has been passed, some official should bawl, 'So perish all idiots.'"

Sir Andrew shifted uneasily, forgetting his injured knee. The squeal of agony with

which he repaired the omission sent his guest's heart into her mouth.

"Oh, what have I said?" she wailed. "What have I said? I assure you——"

"Nothing!" shouted her host. "Nothing at all. I—I beg your pardon." With a shaking finger he indicated the offending joint. "This blasted knee, madam, is enough to drive me mad. I loathe and detest inaction. I hate being girded and carried before my time. Yet if I so much as move . . ."

He let the sentence go and flung himself back in his chair like a petulant child.

Lady Touchstone was by his side, and her hand on his arm.

"I am so awfully sorry. I know so well what it means. But please try to remember that now you're in Nature's hands. Pain's her signal to stop. If you obey her orders, she treats you better and quicker than any leech alive."

The giant blinked at the slight, gloved fingers upon his sleeve and, after a little, up into the smiling face.

"You're very gracious," he said humbly.

With a heightened colour, my lady resumed her seat and, the iron being hot, presently beat out a promise that the knight would lie abed for two days.

"Of course," she concluded, "I should never have come to-day. It was very handsome of you and most unselfish. You've deliberately retarded your recovery because you were anxious to help two—two idiots to their doom."

"I was anxious," replied Sir Andrew, "to have your advice. Now that I have it——"

"What counsel have I bestowed?"

"You have advised me that Miss French is sane, that she desires to be personally remembered, that her desire is just. I honour and accept your advice."

Lady Touchstone smiled.

"It's very nice of you to accept what you do not believe."

Sir Andrew reddened.

"You are more eloquent than you think," he said huskily. "I pray you forget my outburst just now. It was the last, blind rush of the bayed boar."

Lady Touchstone caught her breath.

After a moment the giant continued, frowning.

"I have always looked upon women as an unnecessary evil. My mother I never knew. My father died when I was fourteen. In fourteen years I saw him seven times. I was reared by two aunts, neither of whom

was necessary, both of whom were evil. They believed that, but for me, they would have inherited my father's fortune—and used me accordingly. At their hands I endured penal servitude for ten long years. . . . I have fought shy of women ever since.

"Things sentimental I have always scorned and eschewed. Finding life brief, I sought to eliminate such stuff as weighed nothing. Sentiment stood first upon my list. I judged it idle, an empty toy, froth. When I found it clinging to my sleeve, I tore it off and stamped it under my feet.

"It follows that the love of women seemed to me a very perilous vanity, a snare of the devil himself."

The knight paused and passed a hand across his eyes.

"Well, madam, you and Lyveden have opened my eyes. He has shown me that there is a sentiment which is not sickly, which, sired by honesty, illumines the cold severity of life. You and he have shown me that 'there are more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in my philosophy.'"

"I'm—I'm very glad," whispered Lady Touchstone, who was upon the edge of tears. "What—what have I shown you?"

Sir Andrew stared upon the floor.

"You?" he said. "You have shown me that women are not always unnecessary and not necessarily evil."

* * * * *

One week had gone halting by.

André Strongi'th'arm had left London: Sir Andrew was walking with a stick: Lady Touchstone was looking tired: Valerie and Anthony Lyveden were the best of friends.

The sky was clear enough, but the atmosphere was unreal. The blue bird was there, but he was off colour.

Looking upon her niece and Anthony, Lady Touchstone felt inclined to scream: looking upon Lady Touchstone, Sir Andrew snorted and blew and, finally, begged her acceptance of a dozen of port.

It was this solicitude for her corporal health which stung the lady into action.

She fell upon Valerie that evening.

"A drink," she said, raising her eyes to heaven. "He actually offers me a drink. It's rather pathetic—like a child pressing a toy upon a woman in tears."

"I hope you'll take it," said Valerie. "I'm sure——"

"I had to give up port," snapped Lady Touchstone, "before you were born. Besides, I don't want booze: I want exercise. Why am I here, in London? The streets are up, and Anthony Lyveden's found. Why on earth don't we get a move on?"

"You mean . . . ?"

"What I say. A move. I don't care what it is. But this appalling inaction is breaking my heart. The play's the thing—not the interval."

"What you really mean," said Valerie, "is that I have provided a ghastly anticlimax. Anthony's entrance was worked up into a perfect sunrise of undreamed-of ecstasy—I worked it up—and, now the millennium's here, we're talking about the weather."

"Let me at once admit," replied her aunt, "that I couldn't have put it so well. Having done that, I feel at liberty to tell you that you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"But is it my fault, Aunt Harriet? Is it my fault?"

"That the time is out of joint? No. But you alone can reduce the dislocation." Valerie knitted her brow. "Think. What can anyone do except you? How can anyone move until you give the direction? We're all—Sir Andrew included, and Anthony most of all—afraid to breathe, for fear of upsetting the boat. I'm only speaking now because I'm desperate, because I can't sit still and watch us drift and drift. . . ."

"Whither?"

"Who knows? That's the dreadful part of it. We can't see a yard ahead. We may be drifting on to rocks or breakers——"

"Or into harbour."

"No," said Lady Touchstone. "And that's the danger. No ship that ever was launched drifted into harbour. You've got to work to get there."

Valerie pondered awhile.

Presently—

"Shall I ask them to come to Bell Hammer?"

"Just as you please. I can't advise you because you've got the chart. But it's a move of some sort, and I'd rather drift at Bell Hammer than drift in Town."

"I'll ask them to-morrow," said Valerie. "I suppose they'll come."

"If they do," said Lady Touchstone, "my doom is sealed. Sir Andrew's trying to decide whether to marry me or no. And when he sees me on the terrace in my grey

corduroy, finishing that jumper for Anthony, it'll be all over. But I don't think I can, can I?"

proud of him. And if when he loses Anthony and you lose me——"

"Andrew Plague," said her aunt, leaning forward and looking into Valerie's eyes, "is a man of action." She paused. "If he decides to marry me, he will not wait upon 'I would.'"



"She fell on her knees and buried her face in Lady Touchstone's lap."

Valerie laughed mischievously.

"I can't advise you," she said, "because you've got the chart." Lady Touchstone choked. "As an uncle, I should be very

And if I were to reply that I would marry him if—when you and Anthony are wed, he would immediately withdraw his offer. He has no use for contingencies

dependent upon the whim of an inscrutable Fate. . . . Neither have I. When you told Anthony that you would marry him, when he remembered you, you did a barbarous thing." Valerie started. "Yes, barbarous. He loved you passionately. He loves you passionately still. Is he to suffer because of his affliction?"

The girl looked away and down, wringing her pointed fingers. The woman lay back in her chair and shaded her eyes. After a moment, she continued to speak—very tenderly.

"The Lord gave his memory. As a little, motherless child, that wonderful spring began to well at the back of his tiny brain. First he remembered little prayers, asking God nightly to 'make him a good boy.' Then he remembered nursery rhymes—immemorial toys and jingles, sacred nonsense. Every book of those rhymes should have a rubric. 'In nurseries and places where they lisp, here followeth the Anthem.' Well, that wonderful spring has failed. That abundant, refreshing fountain, in which we go and plunge our tired minds a hundred times an hour, has been dried up. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Don't think I'm being harsh. I understand. But, Valerie, unless you can say to yourself, 'I don't love him,'—"

"I do!" wailed Valerie. "I do! But . . ."

"—unless you can say, 'I know I can't make him happy,' unless you can say, 'I believe he will make me unhappy,' it is your bounden duty, after all that has passed, to take that condition back. Think. If he had no sight, wouldn't you give him your eyes? And thank the good God for the blessed privilege? Of course you would. Then let him share your memory. Make him free of your beautiful fountain, and let him bathe his poor, tired brain. When I think of that poor, dear fellow, straining heart and soul, for love of you, to wring a favour out of the fist of Fate—"

"Don't, don't!" cried Valerie, lifting her head. "Don't whip me any more. I never meant to be cruel." She fell on her knees and buried her face in Lady Touchstone's lap. "I love every hair of his head. I'd give him my soul to-morrow—you know I would. If he was ill, and it would help him, they should bleed me white. And you know how little I'd care about his memory if only it—really—*was*—dead."

"'Vanity of vanities,'" said Lady Touchstone sadly. "'All is vanity.' Don't think I'm lecturing. I'm crying—in the wilder-

ness. Vanity's the terrible freemasonry to which all women subscribe. If I were a man, perhaps I could argue with you. But now you've made me a sign—you've invoked our tacit, cursed sisterhood, and, because I was born a woman, you've shut my mouth."

Valerie looked up into the other's face.

"I'm glad," she said gently, "I'm glad you understand. . . . For now, when I marry Anthony, as I shall—if he'll take me—within the month, it'll be the greatest comfort in all the world to know that you're there—at my shoulder, that you've got a smile for me which he can't fathom, that, no matter what's written, you'll always be able to read between the lines."

Lady Touchstone wept.

Presently she smiled through her tears.

"I might be your sister, Valerie."

Her niece put her arms about her neck.

"Dear Harriet," she said, and kissed her.

Lady Touchstone closed her eyes and blessed God.

* * * * *

Patch was plainly delighted to see Bell Hammer again, and when he found his log in its proper place he lifted up his voice in heartfelt gratitude.

Anthony watched his excitement with hungry eyes.

He supposed that the log was a toy and, as such, kept for the terrier in the bedroom which he had used; and the dog remembered his plaything as a matter of course, and—

Here the billet was brought and laid at Anthony's feet. Two bright, brown eyes stared up expectantly into his: a short, white tail moved slowly to and fro. Clearly the game was waiting, and he—he had forgotten the rules. . . .

Lyveden stooped and caressed the eager head.

"Not to-day, old chap," he said gently. "To-morrow, perhaps. Or—or the day after."

The man was not unhappy. At times he was radiant. After all, as lovers go, he was unearthly rich. He had been given the very fee simple of Paradise itself. True, the estate was in trust, but one day the trust would be broken and he would enter in . . . one day. . . .

Till then—well, he was very lucky: he had much to be thankful for. A serious flaw in his title had been done away. He was, so to speak, in the straight. He would, of course, have liked to be able to see the post—have some sort of idea how long the straight was. Still . . .

Valerie was very sweet—very. No one could have been sweeter. He was most awfully proud of her. And—and she was splendid company. . . .

he loathed the word! Pal. . . . More. The bower had been rearranged—turned into a lounge, a parlour. . . . Arcadia had been converted into a recreation-ground. . . . And Love—Love had been decently clothed in a coat and trousers, with a nice, fat gag in his mouth and cuffs on his little pink wrists.

Anthony groaned.

It was not that he wanted to sit in the shade of an oak and sigh all day into a reed; it was not that he wanted to lie at the feet of Amaryllis, setting her brows to music and calling the heaven to wonder at her soft, dark hair. He wanted to take her hand and run down the dewy glades: he wanted to lift her to pick the dangling fruit—to stand with her on the hill-top and watch the sun get up, mark the breath of her nostrils upon the evening air, plunge with her into the horse-play of the wind: he wanted to hear the woods give back their laughter: he wanted to know that Love was enlarged, free—free to look out of her eyes, free to float upon her voice, free to sit upon his shoulders and flash in her smile. . . .

Lyveden pulled himself together, wrenched his mind out of this perilous grove and tried to thank his stars for providing such a nice recreation-ground. It was vital that he should not lose heart—*vital*. So long as he did not lose heart, he had the ring on his finger . . . the magic ring which, when he had found the trick of it, would turn the recreation-ground into the Garden of Eden.

Then he sat down on his bed and racked his brain until his head ached. . . .

* * * *

Six hours had passed by.

Valerie, her aunt, and Sir Andrew had retired, and Lyveden and Patch were sharing the library fire.

This was too good to be left.



"As a Naiad should sit by a fountain, so sat Valerie by that wood fire."

Company. The word seared his brain. His wonderful, peerless shepherdess—his queen—his darling . . . was an excellent pal—*pal*. Yes, that was it—*pal*. Hell, how

Most of the logs had melted into a quilt of red-grey ash, and such as were still surviving had become mere rosy brands, which winked and glowed silently and, from time to time, settled peacefully into their feathery grave.

The Sealyham was lying on his side before the hearth. Anthony was sitting on a corner of the broad club-kerb, smoking lazily and remarking the silence of the country with grateful ears. He enjoyed it amazingly, this peace. To listen, with windows open, and hear no sound, save the deliberate movement of a grave-faced clock, was fascinating. . . .

A tall door opened, and Valerie came in.

Patch started up, and Anthony got upon his feet.

"And why," said the girl, advancing, "aren't you in bed? You're tired. You admitted you were. Yet you sit up."

"It's a way children have," said Anthony. "I'm so pleased with the pretty fire my hostess gave me. And I'm not at all sure that isn't why you've come back. I thought you looked at it longingly when you went—to bed."

"As a matter of fact," said Valerie, stooping to stroke the terrier, "I came to see you."

"You're a brilliant hostess," said Anthony, "but an unjust judge. You blame me for sitting up, and then deliberately incite me to repeat the offence."

Valerie laughed.

"It's a way women have," she said.

With that, she stepped over the Sealyham and took her seat on the kerb. Anthony resumed his, and, having knocked out his pipe, stretched up his hand and set it upon the broad stone mantelpiece. Then he folded his arms and looked at the beautiful face four feet away.

Valerie stared, smiling, into the fire.

Miss French was one of those women who are full of natural grace. She never took thought how she should sit or stand, but she never assumed an unbecoming pose. As a Naiad should sit by a fountain, so sat Valerie by that wood fire.

Her turned, down-looking head gave you her lovely profile—straight nose, proud, sensitive mouth, delicate chin. The column of her neck rose, white and gleaming, from the broad mouth of her dress. This was simple—a rich, plain purple—low-waisted, sleeveless, admirably cut, with points touching the ground. Black satin shoes, black stockings enhanced the beauty they shod.

She sat sideways, straight-backed, much as a woman sits upon a horse. Her small, firm hands were folded upon her thigh. The toe of one little slipper rested upon the floor: the other lay close, braced against the silk of her stocking, four inches below the knee.

The form was that of a woman: the pose, the air, those of an artless child. As for her beauty, this was neither childish nor feminine: it was that of the wild flower.

"D'you know," said Valerie slowly, "I'm twenty-six?"

The man regarded her, setting his head on one side.

"I think I'd 've said you were younger, but, to tell you the truth, I've never thought of it at all. You don't suggest years or the passing of time. In fact, you discountenance them. When you speak of your age, it's like a man in waders pointing out that he's standing in water."

"Nevertheless," said Valerie, "I'm twenty-six. And in a fortnight's time I shall be twenty-seven. . . . Yes, in two short weeks. You see, I'm very shrewd. I've given you just nice time to think of a present. . . . And now, having been so considerate, I'm going to spoil it all and ask you to let me choose your present myself. . . . I'll tell you what I want. *I want your name.*"

"Valerie!"

As Anthony started to his feet, the girl swung round and caught the lapels of his coat.

"Listen, lad, listen. I say, I want your name. For the moment—that's all . . . for the moment. . . . But if you'll do me the honour to give me that—marry me quietly here on my birthday morning—well, you'll make me wonderfully happy, Anthony dear, and, I think, the proudest woman in all the world."

There was a long silence.

Then—

"What is love?" said Anthony, quietly enough. The girl started. "Don't think I'm being dramatic. I want to know. I think I love you. In a way, I think you love me. I asked you to be my wife. You've said that you will—in a way. My impulse is to dance. And yet . . . We're young and goodly, we two. Are we in love?"

"I think so. Use my eyes and look back. We were—passionately."

"'Were'—yes. Have you outgrown that rapture?"

Valerie shook her head.

"No more than you."

"You mean that it's in abeyance
pent up?"

"Yes," said Valerie.

Anthony stared upon the floor.

"I wonder," he said. And then again,
"I wonder."

The small, white hands slid away, and the girl slipped back to her corner of the club-kerb.

"You see," he went on presently, "I feel so much in the dark. That first day was different. The dark didn't matter at all. In fact, there was no dark. But now—now I've eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and I can see the clouds."

"You'd like to wait?" said Valerie.
"Well, it's natural enough. In a sense I've played with you."

"I told you my impulse was to dance. My impulse is to leap at the offer you make. I'm trying to talk dispassionately, you know. Well, my impulse is to snatch every wretched crumb I can get. My impulse is to take you in my arms, hold you as you've never been held, and then take the pins out of your glorious hair to see what it looks like when it's about your shoulders. . . . But then you know that." He folded his arms and laughed. "No. You say that the return of my memory will set things right. You're confident, persuaded of that. And I want to be sure, for your sake, that your prophecy is sound. You see, I want to be fair. If you marry me, you're done. You can't go back."

"What of yourself?" said Valerie.

Anthony shrugged his shoulders.

"I love you," he said.

"And I . . . ?"

He took his old seat upon the fender.

"That's different," he said positively.
"The squire adores his queen: the queen, her king. When the squire becomes king—"

"Anthony, Anthony, what's the matter with me? You call me a queen, dress up my shame in honourable words, turn my miserable—"

Anthony checked her with a touch.

"My queen can do no wrong."

Valerie covered her face.

"Listen," she said. "For more than a year, now, I've loved you. The first time I ever saw you I loved you as I do now. We never made love, you and I. We just exchanged hearts the very first time we met. I loved you, body and soul—as I do now. Your smile, your laughter, your voice, your strength and gentleness—all these things were the breath by which I

lived. When you touched me, mirrored yourself in my eyes, kissed my hand, I loved you most of all: and when you took me in your arms, the world stood still. I used to long to be married. I wanted . . . to be with you all the time I want to now." She lifted her head slowly and met his eyes. "I've read about love. I've seen a woman's eyes light when her man came into the room. But I think our love was supernatural. It was like a cord strung tighter than cords are ever strung. A breath made it vibrate. Our understanding was infinite. Our sympathy was so deep that it was almost absurd. We weren't lovesick. We never pawed one another. We never had to be together all day long. Some of our happiest moments were spent apart—*apart*, Anthony. . . . Sometimes, in those last weeks before you disappeared, you—you used to go to Town just for the day. Well, those days gave us a chance of focussing our love. It was like standing back from a picture to see it in its true light. I told you so once, and you laughed and said you agreed and that, since we both felt the same, we'd better remain single: and then you picked me up and put me on this mantelpiece and asked what it looked like from there. And the Pleydells came into the room before I was down, and Boy put up Adèle to keep me company, and Berry stood between us and said he was a cuckoo-clock." She broke off with a half-laugh, half-sob which tore Anthony's heart. The next instant she had herself in hand. "Well, there you are. I'm getting away from the point. We shared everything, you and I. *Everything*. Every slightest emotion. I can't explain why or how. It was a miracle: and yet it seemed the most natural thing on earth. . . .

"And now—there's something, Anthony, that we can't share. It's not a chance sensation—I could bear that. It is that very miracle that I've been speaking of. Source, stream and sea—every shining inch that was our heritage, is mine alone. You can't inherit it . . . till you remember . . ."

His head bowed, Anthony sat very still.

The girl went on—fiercely.

"Why should that matter so terribly—make such a difference? I can't explain. There's something I can't control. Perhaps I love you too much. Perhaps the cord's too tight—too sensitive. Perhaps it is that miracles go their own way—override instinct. . . . But I can't pretend, dear, because that's blasphemous. We're treading

holy ground. . . . I love you. I love to be with you. I love to do what you do—share your life. But there's a gap in our relations that only your memory can fill. Your sympathy is strange: your understanding a substitute. I ask you for bread, Anthony, and you give me a stone. . . . It's not your fault, lad, it's not your fault. And God knows—God knows it isn't mine. And when—when you remember. . . .” She fell on her knees beside him and put her arms about his neck. “Anthony, Anthony, I love you! ‘Love’? The word's useless. You're the only thing in all the world that matters. I'm just mad about you, my darling, but you mustn't be mad about me.”

Anthony looked into the deep blue eyes.

“I think,” he said slowly, “I think I see what you mean. I've forgotten our precious masonry, and yet I'm using the signs. When I kiss you, I'm speaking a language which I don't understand. You don't know what prompts me to do it: you only know that its motive is foreign to you—doesn't spring from that heritage which once was ours. And that heritage—that masonry is something you can't renounce. Whether you would or no, the gods won't let you. . . . Yes, my dear, I see, I understand. . . . And I'm easy now. Your prophecy is sound. When my memory returns, it—it'll set

things right.” He looked away suddenly. “I'm sure it will return,” he added. “I'm sure it will. But . . . Supposing—supposing it shouldn't, Valerie . . .”

“It will, my Anthony, it will.”

“It—it mightn't.”

“It will,” breathed Valerie. “It will.”

He turned his head again and looked again into her eyes. The stars were there now, and her whole face was alight with love and eagerness. Her proud lips were parted, and the warm perfume of her breath beat fast upon his chin. And her arms were about his neck. . . .

“Yes,” he said shakily, “it will.”

Then for the second time he turned away.

The arms slipped from his neck, and Valerie rose to her feet.

Anthony stood up and put his hands behind him.

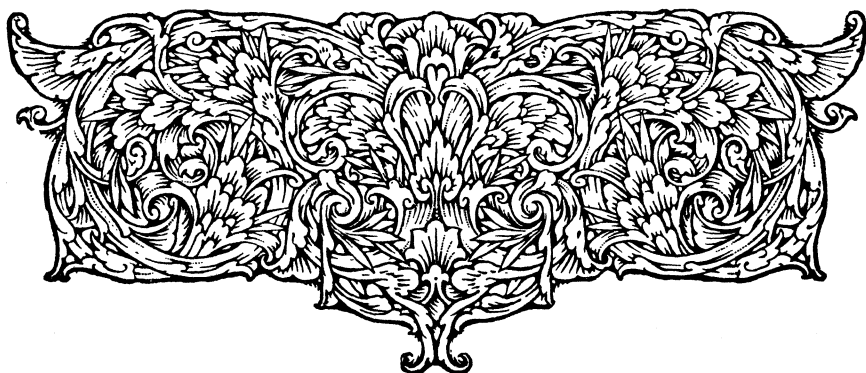
“So the queen,” he said gently, “cast her bread upon the waters and married her squire. And she never regretted this because, while others looked upon her as the squire's lady, the squire never forgot that she was his queen.”

Valerie took his head between her cool palms.

“She was a very lucky woman,” she said tremulously.

Then she drew down his head and kissed his eyes.

A further instalment of this story will appear in the next number.





“ ‘Blushing,’ murmured Cullender, ‘is a social curse.’ ”

AMONG THE RUINS

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

THE picnic party stretched out in the shade of the Roman wall at Hillchester might have served a painter for a picture to be entitled “Blessed Idleness.” All four were in the very early twenties, or “on the threshold of life,” as the Rev. Nugent preferred to call it. He specialised in coaching those “on the threshold of life,” but did not disdain others who were not yet on the mat or had hardly reached the garden gate. His net was a wide one. It scooped up small backward boys in danger of failing the entrance examinations to public schools; their backward elder brothers fell into it on the way to Responsions; and it disdained not those aspirants to such giddy heights as the Indian Civil Service.

The four young men had brought books with them to the picnic, but not a book was open. The smoke of two pipes and a cigarette rose up and melted on the still air. Cullender, the only one of the four

who was not smoking, continued to dip his fingers among the paper wrappings in a basket beside him, and eat whatsoever his hand encountered. Sandwiches, cakes, and fruit came alike to him. Humphreys, a short, dark youngster with twinkling black eyes, watched him as if fascinated.

“The raven and the kite,” he quoted, breaking a long silence, “‘ave an ‘ealthy appetite.’ ”

Cullender raised his eyebrows, also a sandwich from which a neat arc had been bitten.

“So!” he said. “Do you taunt me, fellow? Nay, but I have a large frame to nourish. A pigmy—note my stress on the first syllable—like you should be gorged on half a hazel nut. I think I shall discourse to you on food values. On our return the man Nuggy will doubtless question you as to your progress along the path of knowledge; and shall you give him a blank answer or, worse still, a prevarication?”

Nay, you shall look him in the eye and tell him you have learned something about carbohydrates. Meanwhile, as one of our minor bards has sung, 'Have a banana?'"

Royston, a tall, fair youngster, with a complexion which many a society beauty might have envied, rolled over on to his side.

"Isn't anybody going to do any reading?" he asked.

Gould, the fourth member of the party, humped up his knees and whisked away a doubtful-looking fly.

"Reading," he said, "is surely superfluous. Lying here beneath this wall, I can absorb the classics through my pores. Two thousand years are gone back, and the camp around us hums with Roman life. In yonder meadow a squad of legionaries is practising the phalanx formation. You will notice that the sergeant-major is swearing at them in a language totally unlike the Latin of Cicero. The men have not got their minds on their work. They are looking forward to drinking deep draughts of mead and angostura at the *Caput Regis*, and going on afterwards to the second house at the Amphitheatre. I see that The Twelve Musical Druids are at the head of the bill. You didn't know, did you, that I am the reincarnation of a handsome young centurion? I knew this camp very well in the second century."

"Me, too," said Royston. "If you remember, I was present when they hanged you for selling Roman rations to the Ancient Britons. You used to live in a villa down there, next to Septimus Trumpinus, who conducted the orchestra at the Amphitheatre. You used to lose your hair badly because the young Trumpina, his daughter, was always practising the *precatio virginis*, 'The Maiden's Prayer,' on the shawm. You didn't have an incarnation about that time, I s'pose, Cullender?"

Cullender yawned.

"I seem to remember," he said, "a female agitator named Boadicea. I shouldn't have known you fellows, though. I was one of the nobles—a tetrarch or a pro-consul or something. Was Royston a well-behaved little lad, Gould?"

"Oh, same as now—too fond of the society of fillies. Always at the Amphitheatre, not so much to see the chariot races as to talk to the Ancient British maidens who sold the programmes and chocolates, neatly attired in woad, mistletoe, and other confections. I made an epigram about

them which has gone down into history. 'These are not Angles,' I said, 'but Angels.' Doubtless you've heard that before."

The elbow of Mr. Gould collided gently with the ribs of Mr. Cullender.

"As we don't seem to be doing any work," he said, "it's a pity we didn't invite some girls to come along with us. Nellie Fludyer would have done for you."

"I love her with a pash," Cullender said simply. "I suppose you'd have brought Rose Applegarth. Humphreys and Mollie Nugent seem to tolerate each other. But whom—ah, whom!—could we have brought for our poor little Royston?"

Royston knew very well what was coming. He was a simple soul, and young for his years. His habit of blushing was partly owing to the transparency of his skin, and partly due to inexperience and sensitiveness. The great secret of his life had been his love for Miss Ruth Gates, daughter of the local doctor—"had been" because it remained a secret for about two and a half hours. Since then, for nearly three weeks now, his three companions had conspired to make life unbearable to him. It is bad enough to be the victim of a hopeless passion, without having coarse friends who are for ever making a mockery of it.

Like attracts like, and Ruth Gates was also a victim to chronic shyness and the blushing habit. Her girl friends were for ever talking to her about Royston in beautiful cooing voices. In self-defence they both pretended to hate each other.

"Whom could we have brought for Royston?" Humphreys murmured as if deep in thought. "I know," he added brightly. "Ruth!"

"Ruth who?" Gould demanded. He stared severely across at Royston. "Young man," he said, "do you know anybody of the name of Ruth?"

"Oh, shut up!" interjected Royston unhappily.

"Blushing," murmured Cullender, "is a social curse. Send me six penny stamps for a sample of my never-failing cure. It enables the lobster to see the salad dressing unmoved. Royston, there is more in this than meets the eye. Tell us about it. Be frank! Expound!"

Under stress of emotion, Royston always went back a few years and became a school-boy once more.

"I suppose you think you're beastly funny, don't you?" he grunted.

"Nothing is further from our intentions

than being funny," Humphreys remarked. "I was reading a newspaper article only the other day, which said that the love affairs of the young ought never to be treated derisively, but rather with sympathy and respect. We've all been through it ourselves when we were young, and we're ever so sympathetic and respectful—aren't we, Cully?"

Royston did not think it worth while to mention that he was slightly the eldest of the party. Cullender took up the cue.

"Of course we are. Royston, old dear, will you take a little avuncular advice? Why not tell the lady your secret—which she already knows. There are plenty of ways of doing it. Some favour the swashbuckling costume-period way. Swagger up to her and cry: 'Wench, I love thee.' Then there's the sly, round-the-corner, leading-up-to-it way. You might talk to her about the law, and trials, and Justice Darling, and then add suddenly: 'Talking of darlings, you're one.' Or you might. . . ."

Royston was pretending not to listen. After a while he was able so to bend his mind as to turn deaf ears upon the words. It was not that he lacked the art of repartee—he could take his own part even against the long odds of three to one—but experience had taught him that his witticisms only stimulated the others to prolong the jesting. Quite good chaps, he thought, really—only they didn't understand. He was built differently. It was such a shy, sacred, sensitive plant, this love of his. . . . His gaze wandered to the ragged top of a grey ruin rising above a fold of the ground a furlong away.

Hillchester is not a town. A little hamlet a mile outside the crumbling walls takes the name of the old Roman camp over which grass and brushwood have now run riot. Dig a few feet beneath the surface of the fields, and you may find tessellated pavement, pottery, coins, even as the local archæological society did before its funds gave out.

Hillchester is rich in ruins. Saxon monks built them a grey abbey close to the Roman walls, and relics of it stand to-day, so that you may wander on grass over the floor of refectory or chapel. It was in this direction that the gaze of Royston had wandered. Presently his self-dulled ears caught words once more.

" . . . Well, I don't mind saying I shouldn't like to go there alone at night."

It was Cullender speaking, and speaking

seriously. So they had stopped trying to tease him about Ruth! The time had returned when he could join in their talk.

"Where wouldn't you like to go at night?" he asked.

"Abbey ruins," said Cullender laconically; and Gould, digging Humphreys in the ribs, murmured agreement with him.

"Wouldn't like to go there at night? Why on earth not?"

"They say," Humphreys remarked, "that the ghost of one of the old abbots jazes about of a night and makes himself unpleasant to visitors. The place was sacked by the Danes, you know, and there must have been some ghastly scenes. All rot, I dare say, but I shouldn't care to go there alone."

Royston was unconscious of winks and nods being exchanged over his head. Here was a Heaven-sent chance for him to turn the tables on his tormentors by laughing at them.

"I never," he exclaimed in cold derision, "heard such bally rubbish!"

"Well," said Gould, dangerously meek, "I don't mind confessing that I've got a sneaking belief in ghosts. You go down there at midnight, Royston, and make a noise like a Dane, and see if you don't get a welt over the head with a crozier."

"I wouldn't mind. Was 'ums afraid of bogies, zen? Never mind; Nana frighten 'ums all away!"

Cullender, winking an eye which was not exposed to Royston, took up the running.

"Yes," he said, "it's all very well to be brave while you're yawning here in broad sunlight, talking to three other fellows. But at midnight, alone, with the moon shining through those broken walls, and the ivy throwing queer shadows—brrr! I wouldn't do it, and I bet you wouldn't either, Royston."

At the magic word "bet" Royston pricked up his ears. Fate was being kind to him. Here was a golden opportunity to make his companions pay in hard cash for their previous affronts.

"What'll you bet I don't go there at midnight and spend an hour there alone?"

"I don't mind wagering a pound."

"You're on!"

"I'll have the same bet with you," said Gould carelessly. "You've got to be alone, mind you!"

"I'd better have the same bet with you, too," said Humphreys. "I'm going up to

Town next week, and I don't see why you shouldn't pay my fare for me."

"So am I," said Royston, "and while I'm travelling first class, and having a good lunch and dinner, I shall be thinking of you fellows, and thanking you in my heart for your kindly assistance to a poor man. One thing, though?"

"What?"

"If I go alone, how will you chaps know whether I've been to the ruins or not?"

"We'll take your word," said Cullender. "Always the little gentleman. If you come back and tell us you've been there from twelve until one, we'll believe you and pay. If your nerve fails you, or anything scares you off, you'll admit it and pay us."

"Done!" said Royston. "When do you want me to go? To-night?"

* * * * *

Back at the Rectory, just before dinner, Miss Molly Nugent drew slim arms through the arms of Cullender and Humphreys and let them a short way down one of the garden paths. She was a vivacious maiden to have been bred in a rectory, and she was now bubbling over with unholy mirth.

"Did you manage him?" she asked.

"He rose like a six-ounce trout at a March Brown. Yes, he's going to-night."

"Oh, good! Good! So's Ruth! Three of us have each bet her a pair of gloves. I'd simply love to be there. Wouldn't you? Oh, won't it be a scream?"

II.

THE ruins were eerie enough at night to satisfy the most *blasé* seeker after creepy sensations. The moon was up when Royston set out, and it flung long shadows on the broken walls and arched empty windows. Ivy a thousand years old batted on the decay, and its loose tendrils, stirring in the breeze, kept up a perpetual dance of shadows. The bats which dwelt therein swerved and circled on their blindfold journeys. Somewhere high up a mournful old owl conversed at intervals with another mournful old owl, who responded clearly across half a mile of open country.

It was five minutes past twelve when Royston entered through one of the breaches in the walls. Glancing at his wrist-watch, he discovered the time, and conscientiously determined to stay until five minutes past one.

He looked about him. Yes, it was beastly uncanny—something like a picture on a Christmas card, but without the snow and

holly. But he was not going to let the awesomeness of his surroundings worry him—confound that owl! Ghosts were all rot. It was the easiest three pounds he was ever likely to earn in his life. Lunch at the Savoy next Wednesday, thanks to his three friends. What asses they were! Did they really admire him for doing this? And what would Ruth think about it when she heard?

Thus far had his thoughts carried him when his heart missed a beat. A sharp cry rang out—a human cry. He had been walking, and, turning an angle of broken wall, he was greeted with that sound which first arrested his pulses and then set them galloping. Confronting him was a slim girlish figure which flinched and shrank. In a moment they had recognised each other, and his heart was pounding for a new reason.

"Why, it's Miss Gates!"

"It's Mr. Royston!"

Then, both together: "What are *you* doing here?"

"I'm so sorry if I startled you," Royston stammered.

"I'm sorry if I startled *you*."

"You only just made me jump for the moment."

"So you did me."

Not brilliant dialogue, but then we must remember that they were both desperately shy. The pallor of the moonlight mercifully hid the blushes on their cheeks.

"You're the last person in the world I expected to see here," Royston stammered. "I've come here for a bet. Those silly asses each bet me a pound I wouldn't stay here for an hour alone. Isn't it ridiculous? There's—there's nothing in it."

The eyes of Ruth dilated a little, and her lips fell apart.

"Why, what an extraordinary thing! What a coincidence! I'm here for the same reason. I don't know what my father would say if he knew. I had to pretend to go to bed, and then creep out after the house was shut up. Three girl friends each bet me a pair of gloves I wouldn't stay here alone. I'm not doing it for the gloves, of course, but just to show them. . . ."

Her voice trailed away, and she lowered her gaze. Her thoughts were following the same trend as Royston's. To both of them alike the plot lay revealed.

"It's a—a funny kind of coincidence," he murmured drily.

"So—so I think."

"I've a good mind to punch two or three

heads to-morrow. It's a rotten trick. I mean it's rotten for you. You—you hate being teased, don't you?"

"I don't mind," said Ruth very low, and trying to speak indifferently.

"Some things," he hazarded, beginning to dare, "are too sacred for leg-pulling."

with a moonlight meeting with Ruth, a thing hitherto only dreamed of.

"Do they pull your—I mean do they chaff you?" he asked.

Her inclined head inclined an inch lower.

"It's rotten!" he exclaimed, with a superb feigning of indignation. "It's



"'It's nothing,' he said soothingly. 'It's nothing.'"

"Oh, I don't know," muttered Ruth, in an agony of confusion.

Suddenly Royston felt his heart uplift itself. He was beginning to wonder if, after all, he ought not to be grateful to his three friends. They had planned this thing in order to indulge in an orgy of chaff. Incidentally, though, they had provided him

made you hate the sight of me, hasn't it?"

She answered not a word.

"Hasn't it?" he repeated.

"Has it made you hate me, then?" she asked.

"You know it hasn't!" (This was perfectly splendid!) "Oh, Ruth!"

There, he had used her Christian name ! Things, he reflected, were certainly beginning to hum. He took a step towards her, but Ruth took a step back, as if in the measure of a dance.

"Well," she exclaimed, with a little laugh, "we've won our bets !"

"Yes, but they'll tease horribly, and make you hate me more than you do already." Dash it, why couldn't she say that she didn't hate him ? "Oh, no, we haven't won, though. They stipulated that we should be alone, and we're not alone. We're with each other. They'll expect us to pay, and then they'll—oh, what a dirty trick !"

Ruth, by a movement of the shoulders, expressed horror at the moral obloquy of their tormentors. A new kind of heroism suggested itself to Royston.

"I know !" he exclaimed. "I'll tell them to-morrow that my nerve failed me, and that I never went near the place. They'll have to believe me if I pay out, and it'll be a frightful sell for them. Then you can get your pairs of gloves, and nobody will be able to tease you." He paused. "I—I can't forgive them for making you hate me," he added invitingly.

He took another step towards her, and at that moment she started violently and uttered a sharp cry.

"Oh, what's that ?"

Something certainly moved. I don't pretend to know what it was. A change of wind, perhaps, which caught a mass of loose ivy on the walls, and caused a strange shadow to appear and vanish. But I should like to think that some kindly old ghost arose for a moment from his crumbling grave to send two shy young people into each other's arms. For instinctively they moved together and clung.

"It's nothing," he said soothingly. "It's nothing."

The shock was gone, but the speed of his pulses did not diminish. He was holding her in his arms close against him. She was frightened and needed him. The impossible had happened !

"Oh," she whispered, after a moment, "you think I'm silly, don't you ?"

"No, I don't. Ruth !"

"Yes ?"

"Do you hate me very much ?"

"No-o."

She was making no effort, mind you, to free herself from his arms. He noticed that.

"I'm glad of that," he said, "because I don't hate you. In fact, I—I—what I mean to say—it's all true what they say about us. I mean, it's true about me. You don't mind, do you, Ruth ?"

"No-o."

There are opportunities which even the shyest of mortals could not neglect. He bent his face down to hers. After two bad shots—one on the nose and one on the ear—his lips found what they sought.

The subsequent conversation for the best part of an hour is no business of ours. I even doubt whether we should find it interesting. Their last words, however, before leaving the ruined abbey together are illuminating.

"And we won't tell anybody a word about it, will we, darling ?"

"No, darling."

* * * * *

After breakfast at the rectory the following morning Royston produced three one-pound notes and handed one each to Cullender, Humphreys, and Gould. They received them with an air of acute disappointment.

"You were quite right," said Royston airily. "Directly I saw the place in the distance I felt I couldn't go on. My nerve failed me."

"I thought it would," Cullender growled.

"I don't think it did," said Gould.

The other three stared at him.

"I should say," Gould added, "that your nerve was a bit better than usual last night."

He gently detached something from Royston's shoulder and held it up.

It was a very long fair hair, which shone golden in the early morning sunlight.





“‘Marguerita!’ he cried.”

PRESTIGE

By FREDERICK WATSON

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

MRS. CAMBER, who presided over the exclusive but paying guests of Cresswell Hall, was perfectly certain old Mr. Winterley would not approve. But what was she to do? One must live, and so far as the social side was concerned, no one could very well raise any objection to the Penroses. Even as the name crossed her lips, old Mr. Winterley nodded, grudgingly, perhaps, but without symptoms of actual conflagration.

“I must add they are young,” added Mrs. Camber, with apprehension.

Old Mr. Winterley stiffened. “Young,” he echoed. “How young?”

“Children, but I’m sure well-behaved.”

“You are optimistic, madam,” remarked Mr. Winterley. “I have never associated anything but acute discomfort with young people.”

“I am sorry.”

“And I regret to say I cannot permit such an incursion.”

Mr. Winterley, snorting very significantly, rose from his chair and confronted Mrs. Camber, who suddenly realised with a sense of immense catastrophe the drawbacks of permanent bachelor gentlemen advanced in years and autocratic in temperament. For through an asperity of temper and a complete absence of occupation, he was, of all her establishment, the most difficult, and whoever left, it was never Mr. Winterley. Upon more than one occasion, almost without exception introduced by Mr. Winterley’s inflammatory denunciation of the other guests’ credentials, had she hinted that, so far as she was concerned, the Archdeacon (retired), the Professor, and Mr. Shortt were satisfactory to her, and that she *did* wish,

considering everything and life being so short, gentlemen would behave as gentlemen. But she had never even dimly grasped, being a woman of simple intuitions, why Mr. Winterley fared so badly with Archdeacon Terry, Professor Cuticle, and Mr. Shortt, who had always seemed to her pleasant and amenable, and whose only faults, such as smoking in bed and cutting the towels with their razors, were, like the activities of playful carnivora, demonstrations to be accepted as the will of Fate. That these persons, allied by a common devotion to the library and a habit of sustained intellectual combat, drew their ranks closer in contact with Mr. Winterley, who had no satisfactory explanation of his past, present, or future, was to be expected. That Mrs. Camber perfectly understood. She would in that respect have given Mr. Winterley her sympathy should he be just a trifle querulous and lonely. But the boot was, to use a favourite saying of the Camber family, quite on the other foot. It was Mr. Winterley who ostentatiously derided and scorned the academics. It was he who never tired of referring to the old days when Cresswell Hall was packed from cellar to chimney-tops with a host of good fellows, and the hounds met on the lawn. To all which they would blink at him, caring not at all for these things, and knowing that whereas they had done something, if no more than great books on small subjects, he was only old Winterley, who had done nothing at all, for all his persistent insinuations. He had no relatives. He had no money. He had not even married. He was in all respects inferior and guilty of no achievement.

To old Winterley this acceptance of his absolute spiritual, physical, and mental insignificance was extremely galling. To be ignored, isolated, avoided by such a crew as the Archdeacon, the Professor, and Mr. Shortt, was enough to fret anyone, and not least an ancient gentleman of no occupation at all. It had even driven him to purchasing on the sly one of the Professor's most authoritative pronouncements on symbolism in early Hebraic worship. With this tremendous affair he shut himself up for three days, and emerged, blinded and broken, into the outer world. He was not even armed with a barb of destructive criticism.

Mrs. Camber could not be expected to appreciate such fine points of conduct, and what was worrying her at the moment were the Penrose children, due to arrive that

afternoon. For several days she had determined to break the news to Mr. Winterley; but upon each occasion his attitude towards the joy and gusto of life had been quite hostile. To the other gentlemen, now quietly and innocently pursuing their labours in the library, she had said nothing. It was so obvious that, however forlorn the whole prospect might be, old Mr. Winterley must be told first.

"I came here," announced Mr. Winterley sternly, "and I have remained here. Why?"

Mrs. Camber found his tendency to rhetoric very unsettling. It seemed to make everything impossible without giving any proper satisfaction.

"Because the place is quiet and there are no nuisances, not even dogs or cats. I can see no excuse for children. And how many might there be?"

"Three, Mr. Winterley."

"Where one would be an outrage, madam, you intend to start a—a nursery. Have I ever pretended to you, Mrs. Camber, I was one of those silly old devils who play the fool? That novelist—Dickens—of course, Dickens. I ask you, Mrs. Camber. I've lived my life, and, let 'em say what they like here, I'm the only one who has known what it meant to be young, but I'm not young now—what?"

All this Mrs. Camber—ready to blush on the shortest possible notice—had heard upon many occasions. In the dining-room the Archdeacon, the Professor, and Mr. Shortt had all heard it. They would one and all have even pledged themselves that they believed it rather than be so harried, bombarded, and shelled by the missiles of Mr. Winterley's legendary youth.

"They arrive to-day," murmured Mrs. Camber, averting her gaze before the inevitable crash.

At that old Mr. Winterley uttered a very hasty and ridiculous remark. "Then I go," he said sharply, and added, to illuminate the whole appalling magnitude of the action: "I pack and I go."

At those ominous words Mrs. Camber saw what she had brought upon herself. If Mr. Winterley was so certain about it, how would the news impress the party downstairs? Could they be expected to rejoice when Mr. Winterley lamented? There was in such affairs of life a tendency for persons of equal years to congregate together. And if for the quite temporary emoluments, however bracing, of three children, she had idly flung away the steady remuneration of

Mr. Winterley and the academics, the whole incident could only in charity be regarded as mental.

Quite suddenly she realised that destiny, in the shape of old Mr. Winterley, was on the move, and had, in fact, left the room and was heading for the library for no very obscure intention.

II.

MR. WINTERLEY was well aware of the shock his announcement would provide. He held for once in his hands the means of focussing upon himself the complete attention of the academics. It might even be that in their hour of panic they would turn to him as a man of action and implore his counsel and support.

He paused outside the library door, remembering that the Archdeacon was in the habit of lying upon his bed until dinner. He would deal with him presently and less harshly. With Cuticle and Shortt he would deal heavily. The cloth—ah, well, Winterley had known some very good fellows!—the cloth was different. He moved quietly into the room, and watched for a moment the patient, stooping head of Cuticle, the earnest gestures of Shortt, speaking with inexhaustible superiority to himself. Neither of them noticed him at all. They never did, or very rarely.

"Heard about it?" he asked sharply.

Shortt entertained no intention of noticing Winterley. He made a point of ignoring him until after dessert, and so, moving a step or two aside, he remarked to Professor Cuticle that he had read in the "*Hibbert*," with the deepest possible interest, a most cordial critique of his—Cuticle's—new book.

"But possibly you like children," added old Winterley viciously.

Something moved far back in the hinterland of Cuticle's mind. He stared anxiously at Shortt, who had laid a nervous grasp on his moustache. It was as Winterley had foreseen—the man and the hour. He left the fireplace and, under their individual and concentrated scrutiny, walked with deliberation up the room. As he turned, the door burst open on the horrified countenance of Archdeacon Terry. Had he been nearly throttled by the family ghost in the neglected wing, he could not have expressed a larger sense of crisis.

"Have you heard?" he cried, closing the door.

They transferred their condensed stare

from Winterley. They simply waited, saying nothing. The Archdeacon, panting a little for breath, came heavily over the carpet. His mouth was pursed, his eyes greatly perturbed, a sense, too, of outraged faith in Providence was clearly audible in the occasional snorts of his nostrils.

"I had been asleep," he said, "as usual"—and, pausing, looked searchingly from one to the other to enable the picture of innocence on a quilt to swell their manly passion. "I was asleep. When I rose I left my room. In the corridor I met Mrs. Camber. It struck me then as peculiar." They still maintained their air of inscrutable attention. Old Winterley had moved closer—that was all. "She said three children are coming here—"

"Will, I happen to know, arrive at any moment," broke in Winterley. "It is simply monstrous. I propose—"

"A moment," said Mr. Shortt, "please."

But no words came. His sole instinct at such a time was to form a sub-committee. In all the real crises of his official life it had never failed him until now.

The Archdeacon made vague and unhelpful gestures. "What to do?" he repeated. "Surely something must be done."

Professor Cuticle drew out his handkerchief and wiped his glasses. "Nothing can be done," he said. "I am surprised at Mrs. Camber. I could not have believed it of her. But she *knows*, she *knows*—"

"May I inquire," asked old Winterley, with some natural irritation, "what she knows beyond the fact that we are all going?"

"All what?" echoed the Archdeacon, aghast.

"Going. Surely if anything is clear, that is. I would just as well live with a pack of monkeys."

"Yes, yes," mused the Archdeacon. "I agree, though, as it happens, *I* am a grandfather. Well, well! However, there it is. Only, my dear Winterley, the idea of *going* rather takes away the breath. I mean where are we going to—eh?"

The Professor nodded. "I have not the means to leave," he said with candour, "and this place is very moderate and agreeable. But I am, I admit, terrified by children. I say no more."

Mr. Shortt maintained a deep and elusive silence. It was only too probable his spritely nature had, like some late flower in autumn, perished with a single stroke of frost.

"I intend," said old Winterley, "to take immediate steps."

"And these," ventured the Archdeacon, "and these——"

"That I interview the relatives of these children and point out—courteously, I may add, quite courteously—that the owner of

these children may be unlike other children—some others, I mean."

"All children are equally obnoxious," snapped old Winterley.

The Archdeacon mused and seemed on the



"May I introduce Miss Burney?"

this establishment is entirely dependent upon its existing arrangements—in a word, that none of us are young, and all of us unfamiliar with and even—well, even opposed to children in any shape or form. I hardly think any guardians or parents would persist in an intrusion after that. Besides, it would mean ruin to Mrs. Camber, which I shall not hesitate to point out——"

"Mind you," broke in Mr. Shortt, "I'm sure you're right, Winterley, and of course I am in absolute agreement, but, after all,

brink of speech. Then he met rather unhappily the mild, dispassionate gaze of Cuticle, and smoothed with secret complacency his thin grey hair. Although seldom invited to stay, he was, after all, a grandfather, whereas Cuticle had never married, Shortt's wife had died within a summer, and old Winterley—they all knew what he was.

"May I take it, then, that you gentlemen will leave it in my hands to protect our mutual interests?"

"With limitations," said Shortt. "I won't be a party to any unnecessary unkindness. After all——"

"And I won't leave," remarked Cuticle amiably. "They'll hate me much more than I'll mind them. That's why we get immensely old and ugly."

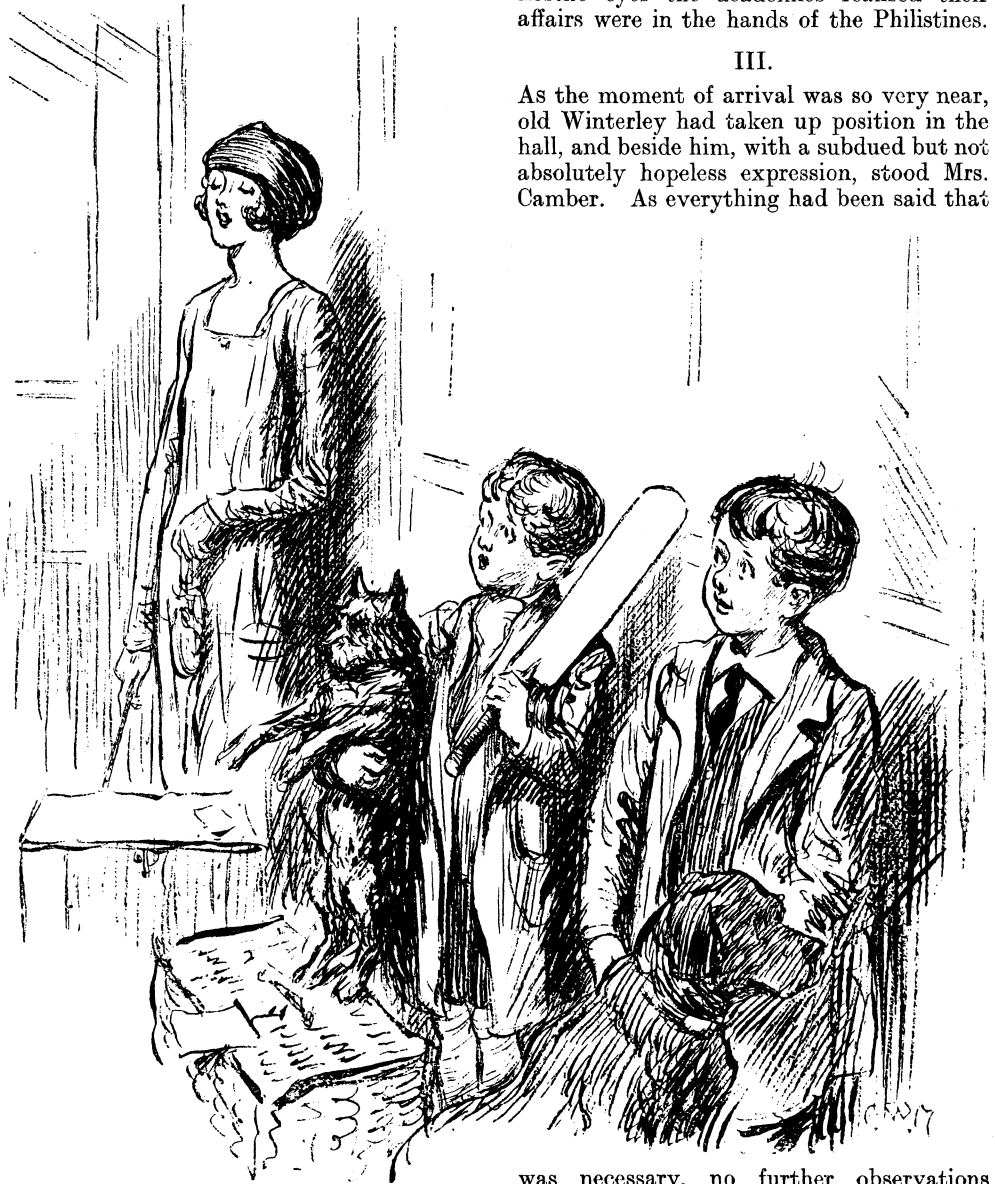
"Personally, considering my cloth," said

had always suspected. "May I take it, then, that you gentlemen are prepared to leave the question in my charge, to act for the best?"

There was no reply. With troubled and hostile eyes the academics realised their affairs were in the hands of the Philistines.

III.

As the moment of arrival was so very near, old Winterley had taken up position in the hall, and beside him, with a subdued but not absolutely hopeless expression, stood Mrs. Camber. As everything had been said that



the Archdeacon, "I feel a certain delicacy. I should, I fear, feel it a duty, however painful, to remain. I hope you quite understand."

To old Winterley the miserable fibre of the academics was revealed. It was as he

was necessary, no further observations passed. Old Winterley had, quite inaccurately, stated that he represented the strongest possible determination upon his colleagues' part to act in the most decisive fashion, should children come. Upon which Mrs. Camber had expressed regret, and said that he was at liberty to explain to anyone

he pleased that he was about to pack. This attitude, so composed and even nonchalant, caused in the outraged breast of old Winterley considerable perturbation. He had, after all, never actually intended to go. Where on earth was he to go to ?

As the moment drew nearer and nearer, he turned over one or two preparatory speeches. He realised at once how necessary it was that he should stand—a condemnatory figure, with the open fireplace at his back—to confront them. He felt increasingly certain that as the matron of the party ushered in her live-stock, he should scrutinise her, turn to Mrs. Camber and ask in a clear, unmistakable tone, "Can you inform me, madam, of the nature of this invasion ?" A note of that kind would show at once how matters stood, and clear the air. And when the children had disappeared, possibly lamenting, into the night, he would walk composedly back to the academics and say once and for all : "You see ? I always told you. Long ago I was the very dickens of a fellow."

There was in the sunny glow of that reverie a tremendous ring at the bell. It was as though a giant were tugging at the handle just for the fun of it.

"There," thought old Winterley, "that's what comes of children !"

He was quite calm. His temperature, if low, was normal. He was, in fact, unprepared for anything simply because he awaited a matron. It was perhaps as well, for with the unfolding of the inner doors and the shutting of the outer, there was no warning, no sense of doom. What was coming came right away.

It was headed by a laughing boy with red cheeks and a snub nose, and as he was dragging a retriever that preferred to travel on its haunches in strange houses, he took no heed of old Winterley. Behind him the outer hall was discharging life like the Ark. There was a still smaller boy with a cat in a basket and a cricket bat, a very hairy Scotch terrier with a suspicious but not conquered expression, a ferret in a box, and a tall, perfectly composed, and noticeable girl at the tail. In the silence, which was no silence so far as the invaders were concerned, Mrs. Camber (who had "seen better days" before she married and buried poor Camber) was looking from one small boy to the other with searching and timid amusement. In her solitary childhood, spent amongst the hills of Devon, she had played her poor games alone ; during her

brief marriage no children had come, while the offspring of her relatives were very ordinary indeed, taking very strongly after the Cambers. She had always possessed a hunger, sneaking about somewhere inside her, for the real thing—the dirty, assertive, self-dependent human boy.

Old Winterley trembled with a very proper sense of outrage. He particularly disliked animals, especially active, resourceful animals with a pungent scent. And these boys were at the dangerous age. Their sense of destruction must be acute, their ideas of humour dissentious, and their personal habits vile. He was glad his task was likely to prove so simple. Just a word with the young governess, and the unpleasant episode would be over. It must be obvious, even to Mrs. Camber, that the house was not a zoo. He heard Mrs. Camber's voice repeating with idiotic gusto, "So this is Bill, and this is Henry," and moved to the attack. He inserted his monocle, and his eye rested upon the girl just at the moment Mrs. Camber remarked : "May I introduce Miss Burney ?"

In a melodrama it would be a moderate statement to say that old Winterley recoiled, as he had every reason to do. For he was looking at a ghost. Out of the corridors of his long and disputed past something—he could not put it more clearly—had come to life. But who—who was this beautiful girl, as fresh to memory and also evasive as the scent of a flower ? Overcome by the treacherous disabilities of old age, he relaxed, his mouth dropped again, innumerable wrinkles returned and chased one another across his withered cheeks. Only his eyes were motionless, glued to this—this Christine—he heard one of them call her that—this Christine Burney. The two names restored nothing. He had never known a Burney.

Again Mrs. Camber attempted, rather flutteringly, an introduction. He was aware that for the last few moments a period of whispering, illustrated by a veiled inspection of himself, indicated too clearly the nature of the conversation between the ridiculous Mrs. Camber and this apparition. A sudden idea turned his eyes upon the two boys, who were carrying on, in an unusually restrained, even creditable, tone, a discussion almost certainly about himself, most probably—a startling, rather painful notion—wondering whether *they* could stick *him*. Old Winterley took a step or two from the fireplace and examined them. They met

his gaze with friendly, not sinister good nature. They were, he must admit, quite decent little chaps, for all their questionable family friends. But they were boys, and they bore no resemblance to anyone in his perambulation of sixty-five years.

"Mr. Winterley!"

It was evident Mrs. Camber could be evaded no longer. He turned and was formally introduced. He knew at once that a little chat was simply imperative, and a very confidential little chat indeed.

"Perhaps," he remarked, "Miss Burney would care to see the garden."

"Could we come?" asked the small boys in unison.

Old Winterley deliberated. He was determined that an interview which seemed to him more and more tremendous should not be interrupted and spoilt by the antics of small boys. He returned sixty years and connected the little boys at the other end. Indians—of course. Stupid of him. A good game, too—no doubt of it.

"I know what you'd like," he said, with the anxious heartiness of a man who suspects he has fallen behind the times: "you'd like to run into the shrubberies and—and play Indians."

The small boys set up a shout of delight, and as old Winterley smothered a sigh of relief, the one called Bill added brightly: "We're just the number. You can't play under four, and only just on that—chief, squaw, settler, trapper."

"No, no," broke in old Winterley, at a loss.

"I say," remarked the other one, "aren't we going to have a decent time?"

"No," corrected old Winterley sharply.

They looked at him in some surprise.

"I mean," he added, "I will find you Indians. I am not able to play. I will watch with your sister."

"She isn't our sister," said the small boys in unison. "And where are the Indians?"

Old Winterley searched high and low for Indians. Then he faced the crisis with the composure of despair. "If you hide in the shrubberies," he said, "they will come in a few minutes."

"Promise?"

"I promise."

"Will they whoop?"

A shadow of doubt passed over old Winterley's face. "I know they will do their best," he replied, and opened the front door.

"Miss Burney and I," he said to Mrs. Camber, "are going into the garden—by the sundial, in fact—for a little chat." He paused and tapped one finger with his monocle. "I suppose," he resumed without confidence, "I suppose, Miss Burney, that the boys will forget all about this Indian business."

For the first time a smile trembled on her lips, and the set composure of her face, which had so baffled old Winterley, was suddenly transformed and became all lighted up with laughter.

"Ah!" gasped old Winterley, and just missed that other ghost by the breath of a moment.

"You promised," said the girl.

"If I promised," returned old Winterley, who had long since ceased to play heroic parts, "if I promised—er—my dear, then of course—of course. A minute, please. I'll join you at the seat behind the dial. The sun should now have arrived there—yes, it is just half-past three."

With a little bow and a last exasperated look at those eyes, which had looked, with he knew not whether kindness or disdain, upon his dead youth, he went thoughtfully away, and, opening the library door, caught the Professor on his knees quite obviously at the keyhole, while Shortt and the Archdeacon hung like hungry jackals on his flanks.

"There is a curious draught," remarked the Archdeacon, with unexpected resource.

"There is not a moment to be lost," said old Winterley, carefully closing the door.

"Are they staying?" asked Shortt. "I saw those two boys. Jolly, I thought, though, of course, I know—"

"I must ask you, gentlemen, to do exactly as I tell you. Discussion may be fatal. The whole matter has received the greatest consideration."

"What are we to do?" asked the Archdeacon. "I may say, although I am ready for any reasonable course—"

"It is child's play," interrupted old Winterley, with a flash of absolute truth. "I have arranged that you all play Indians in the shrubberies."

The Archdeacon uttered a loud and savage laugh and, turning abruptly, walked heavily up the room to the window. His silence in itself was both a rebuke and a decision. Mr. Shortt, who was not a dignitary, and cherished a strange delusion that, as a Bohemian, he must never expose any natural emotion, such as amazement or

horror, or blind wrath, blinked and pulled his moustache. Only the Professor spoke, and he did so without rancour or argument or for any other cause, but simply because he had not heard.

"It is absolutely essential," repeated old Winterley, more loudly, "that you, Shortt and Terry, play with the little boys while I arrange matters."

"Very natural and proper," agreed Professor Cuticle. "I see no harm in that—that is, if they'll play with us."

"Indians!" thundered the Archdeacon, turning heavily about.

"Indians? Good idea, Indians," chirruped the Professor. "I used to play Indians. On the stomach, like this."

"I beg of you," pleaded the Archdeacon. "Besides, surely the whole basis of concealment is to take cover."

"I admit it," said the Professor sadly. "One forgets. These boys will spot us at once."

"I wouldn't go as far as that," said Shortt. "After all, who knows the garden better than I? Look here."

He took up a page of Cuticle's MS. for the "Hibbert," drew a pencil from his pocket, and made swift and not incompetent diagrams.

"They are sure to be here," he remarked, with a dab on the shrubberies; "they will watch the turn of the drive here. I propose that while we divert attention by an engagement in their front, our main attack falls on their rear."

"I agree," said the Archdeacon, moistening his lips.

"I should only like to point out," amended the Professor, "that the position being exposed for our tactical offensive, the enemy will appreciate that we are not attacking in force."

"Pardon me," corrected old Winterley, "but the enemy have no information at all except that I shall not take part."

"I don't quite understand," said the Archdeacon suspiciously.

"I must discuss the whole question with Miss Burney."

"And who is Miss Burney?"

Old Winterley shook his head. "You have me," he said, a reply that helped no one.

"Might I ask," pursued the Professor, wiping his spectacles with the greatest zest, "might I ask whether we have any means of communication?"

"You whoop," said old Winterley; "that was a point which slipped my memory."

The three gentlemen nodded, and conferred together with every symptom of grave animation. They took no further notice of Winterley, who, as he left the room, was surprised to see with what ease and dexterity the Professor could imitate something—probably an owl—by blowing furiously between his two united thumbs.

IV.

OLD WINTERLEY found it very difficult to make a pleasant and profitable start. His curiosity regarding her ancestry was a little delicate, romantic naturally, but hardly the subject for precipitation. Pondering over one or two promising channels of conversation, he trudged beside this Christine Burney, and very shortly, being out of breath and suffering considerably, he took her arm in a perfectly paternal and persuasive manner and gasped:

"For Heaven's sake, slower, my dear, for I am not a fox-terrier, and feel older every minute!"

Instantly she stopped and regarded him dubiously. She was not at all sure whether this was quite the kind of establishment one would choose even for a month.

"Can we sit for a moment over there by the surdial? But so long as we sit, I'm not particular."

To youth—the strange Southern youth of that unknown girl—there was hope in the warm glow of the sun where sixty was concerned, that and the tender melody of trickling water. There she could, as on other similar occasions, slip noiselessly away. And long after, when the feet of twilight were haunting the shadowy places, the old gentleman would wake with a start, shiver, snarl, and go peevishly indoors. For such is the destiny, such are the deserts of ancient men.

It is conceivable old Winterley was alive to his peril. Reaching that spot so utterly quiet, and sitting upon a lounge chair with a cushion for his neck, he took no early risks.

"You have not always lived in this country, my dear?"

"No, hardly at all. Very soon we all leave for Spain."

"Spain—Spain?"

Afar off some faint familiar note, like a bell half audible across a dark and mist-hung sea.

"I was once in Spain—long ago. Only for a month. I have forgotten all about it. Bless my soul, to think how long ago! When I was in the twenties."

"To be sure," she said amiably, with her grave eyes on his, and noting the secret wriggling forms of the small boys crawling through the shrubberies in dark pursuit of the Professor.

"In those old days I was not like this. I knew crowds of people, had heaps of friends. They won't believe, confound 'em, but I lived. Heavens!"

She smiled her wistful, patient smile. Was it not always so with the old? Black or white, brown or yellow, were they not all the same?

"I wonder," mused old Winterley, with a refinement of cunning, "whether your father was the Burney who was at Oxford in my time."

"Dad," she said simply, "began life as a street musician. There was nothing to be ashamed of there. He was a great artist. Even my mother never denied that."

"I am sure of it," said old Winterley, with a sense of catastrophe. "Your dear mother," he said, "was not, I suppose, related to the Wiltshire Peterkins? I once knew a Miss Dorothea Peterkin. Dead ages ago, poor thing."

She smothered an instinct to laugh outright. Her mother a Peterkin! What, in the name of Heaven, was a Peterkin? He was of a rare wit—the old person.

Perceiving that there was, to use his own words, "nothing doing," old Winterley relapsed, and closed his eyes to recall in his own consciousness the knowledge that would, he was quite certain, be positively stupendous. And it seemed good to Christine—things being as they were—to practise an art which has, in our social history, been insufficiently recognised. She decided to talk in her low, slumberous voice of many things. Before long he would snore, and a little later she would slip away. She began accordingly to talk in a soft, caressing modulation of far countries and ceaseless journeying, of places seen and songs heard, until old Winterley's head pitched forward, steadied for an instant, and again, with even heavier impulse, jerked downwards on his collar.

"And no one," she said, "sang that one as my mother, Marguerita."

Old Winterley afar off heard that name, and, hearing it, knew all. Marguerita! Who but Marguerita? He leaped so suddenly upward that she said: "He is of a surety dead."

"Marguerita," he cried, "your mother, my dear! Marguerita, the Spanish nightingale?"

"Indeed, yes."

"Marguerita!" he repeated. "Why, it must be forty years ago! You say she is now very famous."

"All the world," replied Christine quietly, "adores my mother."

"I always said," put in old Winterley, floundering as it were to shore, "I always said she was a genius. I told her. I knew it. I was right, you see."

He stared for a long time at the stagnant pond, an expression of pensive but deepening assurance in his eyes. It was all coming back, one thing upon the heel of another, and, overshadowing all, the astonishing revelation that even he, most sensitive to romance, had hardly given a thought or backward mental glance to Marguerita, who must, without any doubt whatever, have occupied ever since the citadel of his affections. It only showed—Heavens, it only showed! A very great singer—a world-famous prima donna—well, well! But why not—why not?"

"You knew my mother?" she asked politely.

"Knew her? My dear young lady, directly I clapped eyes on you I said to myself: 'Now, where have I seen that face?' Your mother's eyes, my dear. Oh, I could tell you of some wonderful days!"

"You will. I am never tired of talking of her."

"Of course, of course. But later, my dear, later. Is your mother, then, so very well known? Would they have heard of her at Cresswell? Don't think I'm rude, my dear, but I've lived out of the world so long."

"They have records on the gramophone."

"Have they, now? Well, well, to be sure. Did your dear mother marry young?"

"No, no, not till she was over thirty. When she was twenty she had a sad affair. Perhaps you know."

"Perhaps, my dear, perhaps. Just tell me."

"She fell very deeply in love. But they parted. Sad, was it not? Though I have been told such affairs are the making of an artist."

"I suppose," he said, with a natural hesitancy, "your sweet mother did not mention his name."

She shook her head.

Old Winterley sighed, and as all persons in moments of great emotion are fortunately expected to subdue their anguish by changing the subject, asked—

"She is, I trust, in good health?"

"Indeed, yes. Here is a snapshot taken last year. It is wonderful."

To old Winterley it was far more than wonderful. It was miraculous. In those early days Marguerita, though of undoubted vitality, had been slim and fragile, with large haunting eyes and a waist that a man's hands could span, and she had a way of turning on her ankles with a swish of her skirt. But this! He gave it one poignant transfixed stare and closed his eyes. Marguerita was enormous. She was a continent of a woman, an empire, and why had he come to think of her as beautiful?

"Well?" He knew with what keen, inquisitive eyes she was watching him.

"It brings it home," he murmured with feeling.

"They will like to hear of it, those others," she said. "It is, after all, a great romance, is it not?"

"Oh—Heavens, yes! Oh, rather! But, my dear, don't more than tell them. I wouldn't like this photo nosed over by strangers. Let me keep this as a memory of—of Marguerita. Come, will you?"

"If you like."

"It is your only photograph, perhaps."

"It is."

Upon hearing those seemly words, nothing

short of the rack would have deprived old Winterley of that outrageous thing.

"They have finished their game," she said; "here they all come. Shall I tell them?"

"Yes," said old Winterley. "Who has a better right than Marguerita's child? Tell them, my dear. I am going indoors."

He was aware that the Archdeacon, Shortt, and Cuticle were eyeing him with open curiosity, but he only smiled a little pensively at them, and, without a word, went slowly over the lawn indoors. In the hall he met Mrs. Camber.

"Ah, Mrs. Camber," he said, "pardon me if I go quietly to my room. I have had a certain incident of long ago quite suddenly—too suddenly, perhaps—recalled."

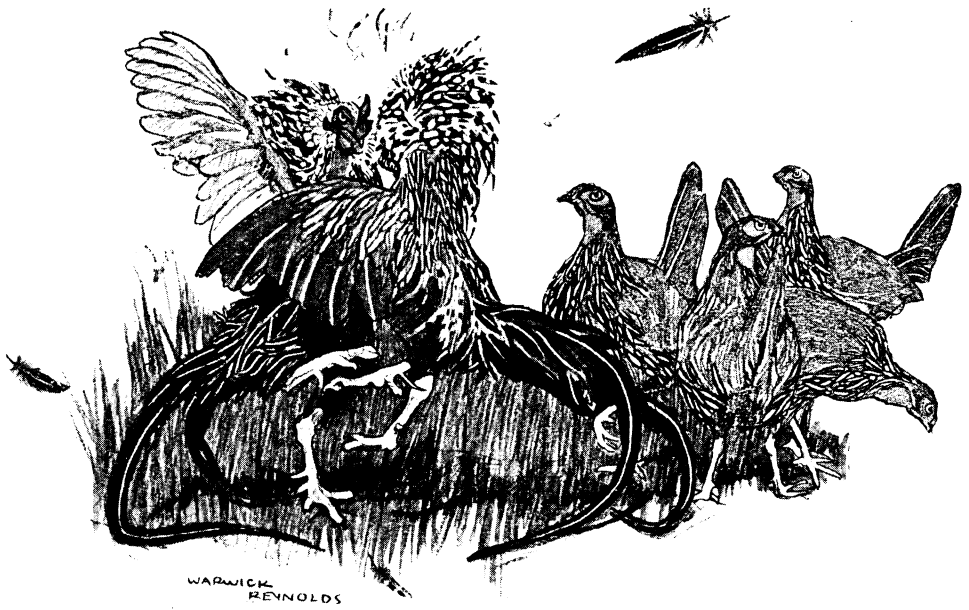
"Oh, dear Mr. Winterley!"

"No need for distress, Mrs. Camber, no need at all. It's an old story, but when I tell you that Miss Burney is a daughter of a lady I admired long ago, you will understand."

"Oh, dear Mr. Winterley!" repeated Mrs. Camber, but with an emphasis.

"Yes, all the world knows the name of Marguerita Carmen, but to me she was and always will be just little Marguerite. Excuse me, Mrs. Camber, if I go upstairs. Miss Burney will explain. She has just given me a photograph of her dear mother, and I shall not be happy until it is safely under lock and key."





"They whirled up, down and about in furious fight, beak, wing and spur in play."

COCK-O'-THE-WALK

By LIEUT.-COLONEL GORDON CASSERLY, F.R.G.S.

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

ONE last vigorous peck, the eggshell fell asunder, and the little chick stepped out into the light of day. Or, at least, into such light as filtered down through the thick foliage of the trees and the denser undergrowth, the light that was a pleasant green gloom filling this vast Indian jungle, the great Terai Forest under the giant Himalayas. But it was dazzling effulgence to the tiny chicken that stood, with almost an air of pride in his achievement, regarding the shattered shell which had imprisoned him, and seeming to look disdainfully on the still unbroken eggs of the rest of the clutch hidden under the tangled twigs of a thorny bush. The sober brown hen that had laid them there had known by instinct where to place them safe from the ponderous tread of a wild elephant or the sharp hoofs of the big sambhur stags.

And now with maternal care she strove to gather her first-born under her sheltering wing, while she looked nervously at the other eggs which had not yet revealed their

occupants to her anxious gaze. But the wee chick scorned the offered protection, and refused to have the enchanting sights of this strange world again hidden from his bright, inquiring eyes. With the patronising air of the elder brother he watched the subsequent shattering of the other eggs and the emerging into daylight of six or seven more chicks, which, unlike him, scurried to the maternal shelter as though afraid of the new life that was opening to them. Then, while they hid in their refuge, he began instinctively to peck at the busy ants that swarmed on the ground, engaged on the affairs of their community.

Suddenly on his restless eyes there burst a dazzling vision—or so he thought it—a gorgeous bird of brilliant plumage, scarlet, green, and black, with vivid red comb and long, curving tail-feathers. To the newly-hatched chick it was truly a wonderful being, yet in reality it was just an ordinary Northern India jungle-cock. It looked the twin-brother of an English bantam; but

its ancestors were the progenitors of all the farmyard fowl the world over. Behind it trailed its harem of sober-hued brown hens, like the mother of the chick, which, although he did not know it, was gazing at his own father. As it drew abreast of the bush sheltering the new brood, it stopped and, throwing up its red-crested head, woke the silence of the primeval forest with a piercing crow.

"Cock-a-doodle!" rang out the proud challenge through the jungle.

Civilised roosters have added a note to the original trumpet-call of their race and make it "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" now in the farmyards. Yet the crow of this trim little jungle-cock in the heart of the Terai Forest would have sounded strangely familiar to any white man who had chanced to hear it. And all the more so when from round about the challenge was taken up and defiantly echoed in a dozen places until the human hearer could have fancied himself in a village of his homeland.

When the first jungle-cock had repeated himself until his throat was tired, he and his train of adoring ladies spread their wings and suddenly whirled up into the air like a covey of partridges. But they rose high and settled on almost the topmost branch of a big-leaved teak tree, and there, with clucks and squawks and rustling of feathers, prepared to roost for the night. And on the forest giants around other groups did likewise.

But the mother under the bush peremptorily gathered her rebellious first-born beneath her wing with his brothers and sisters, and squatted down in the dust under the bush to spend a night full of anxious care because of the danger, to her brood, of gliding snake and silently-crawling jungle-cat.

The gloom of the forest deepened into blackness, the evening hum of insect-life died down, and nothing broke the intense silence of the dark world under the tree-tops save the eerie wail of a giant owl wheeling against the stars, or the sudden harsh bark of a kakur antelope warning harmless jungle-dwellers of the murderous presence of a stealthily-moving tiger that answered its betrayer with an angry roar. Safe in the topmost branches, the hairy little monkeys and all the jungle-fowl that were free from family responsibilities slumbered until dawn brightened the unseen mountain-tops above them.

The crow of the jungle-cocks sounded

"Revally" to the sleeping world, and the bright-plumaged little trumpeters passed the call on for hundreds of miles through the aisles of silence of this wonderful Terai Forest that stretches below the giant rampart of the Himalayas across Northern India from Assam to Nepal. Obedient to the call, the sober mates of the gaudy cocks fluttered down in their millions from the trees and began their daily toil of search for food.

And in the shelter of her thorny fortress the mother-hen opened her tired eyes, shook herself, fluffed her feathers, spread her wings, and let out her day-old family to begin life. Foremost of them our little chick stepped out and commenced to scratch the dust like an aged and experienced fowl. One of his downy brothers dared to peck at the same scurrying insect as himself: the arrogant eldest-born flew at him in a fierce attack that scared the offender and the rest of the family, and secured for ever the unquestioned predominance of the first-hatched. From that moment he was to his little brothers and sisters Cock-o'-the-Walk indeed.

The days went by at first unmarked, same and uneventful to the new brood—the reveillé at dawn, the search for food, the circumscribed roaming, the mother-hen's anxious watch over the safety of her fluffy offspring against the many perils of which they were ignorant, but which she well knew to exist. If any of them wandered too far away from the others, she would follow and hustle it back. Needless to say, little Cock-o'-the-Walk gave her more trouble than all the others. He was the worst offender in the matter of straying, and the bigger he grew the more reckless he became. The nights were most fraught with fear to the troubled mother until her young family were able to leave the ground and fly up to roost on the high boughs. But even then the menace of climbing jungle-cat and stealthy snake was not removed altogether; for often in the dark hours a sudden outcry, a burst of despairing squawks, the fluttering of helpless wings, bespoke a tragedy among one of the myriad clusters of fowls perched in the tree-tops.

The setting of the stage in which the little brood acted their parts in the Play of Life was grandly picturesque. Under the shadow of the long line of snow-topped mountains the Terai Forest lies, surging like a sea up the barrier of the foot-hills, thrusting out into the flat plains of Bengal and threatening

to swamp with its green waves the cultivated fields until dammed by human hands. Close to the foot of the Himalayas it is filled with the giant bulks of teak, sal and simal trees, rising like stately columns from the tangled undergrowth, the boles bare of boughs until, near the top, the leafy branches jut out suddenly and form a canopy of foliage so dense that the fierce Indian sunshine fails to pierce it, and sends only a subdued greenish glow to light up the recesses below. From trunk to trunk in bewildering profusion riots an inextricable tangle of creepers hanging, criss-crossing, writhing like battling snakes about each other, twisting around some tall tree, biting deep into its bark and slowly strangling it in a death-clutch. From stem to stem their long and graceful festoons swing. Here and there open glades of the forest are waist-deep in green bracken like an English park, and in them, with twitching ears and alert eyes, stand brown-hided sambhur hinds with their slim-legged fawns. In denser undergrowth hide their heavy-horned stags with dark coats that mimic the black shadows. Or in lighter woodland roam herds of *chitul*, the spotted deer whose dappled sides make them like English fallow deer, although their antlers are dissimilar. And those mottled hides are Nature's gift of protective colouring to them, for they assimilate to the play of light and shade on the ground where the sun penetrates the overhead scantier foliage of their chosen haunts, and so make it difficult for their enemies to distinguish them when they are motionless.

But further away from the mountains the forest becomes a dense jungle, where below the trees the undergrowth of monster ferns, with fronds studded underneath with long, hooked thorns, and impenetrable masses of tropical vegetation spring up in rank luxuriance from the damp soil. Through the thick cane-brakes and the solid clumps of tall tiger-grass not even the wild elephants which roam the Terai in herds can push their way where they will, but are forced to tread the narrow paths beaten by a myriad generations of animals, and ground-dwelling small beasts and birds have to burrow miniature tunnels through the dense undergrowth.

But little Cock-o'-the-Walk and his brothers and sisters lived near the foot-hills, and could pick their way daintily where they listed among the bracken or under the tall bushes gay with white flower-bells. He was a pert young cockerel now, this first-born of

the brood, and his fighting spirit grew with his comb and his spurs, as his family knew to their cost. He was replacing the dull garb of chickenhood by brighter plumage, and was already beginning to strut swaggeringly before shy but admiring pullets.

A surer sign of his approaching cockhood was vouched by his father, who at last deigned to notice his existence, but in a way the reverse of fatherly. Hitherto the older bird had ignored his offspring, much to the disappointment of Cock-o'-the-Walk, who used to watch him from a distance with admiration and a feeling of awe that gradually changed to envy and dislike. But one day the youngster ventured near his parent's train of brown hens and scratched up the soil with affected unconsciousness of their presence, but a secret hope of winning notice from them. The enraged lord of the harem observed the audacious act and, flying at the daring intruder, fell on him with beak and spur.

The plucky young cockerel made a gallant but unavailing fight. Age, weight and superior armament told, and he was driven into flight in a cloud of swirling feathers. It was a hard lesson, but a useful one.

Little Cock-o'-the-Walk took it to heart and profited by it. It taught him that courage is not enough to win battles. As if of set purpose he pitted himself, whenever he could, against adversaries of his own size. He picked frequent quarrels with his brothers and, when they were too cowed to oppose him, with all the other cockerels of the neighbourhood. He was usually victorious, and his conceit grew with his triumphs.

Yet when he acquired a new accomplishment, a rather uncertain and quavering crow, he sought for solitude to practise it. An unusual shyness drove him into secluded corners to exercise his voice. But when for the first time he succeeded in standing on tiptoe, flapping his wings and giving vent to a correct, if weak, "Cock-a-doodle," he felt a desire to gather all the jungle-world about him to hear, behold, and admire. But he had no auditors save a troop of little brown monkeys in the trees overhead, and they were too busy discussing their own important affairs to notice an insignificant bird below them.

One day, however, his fast-improving crow was heard and angrily answered by an adult cock which was prevented by the undergrowth from seeing that its emitter was only a cockerel. At the acknowledgment



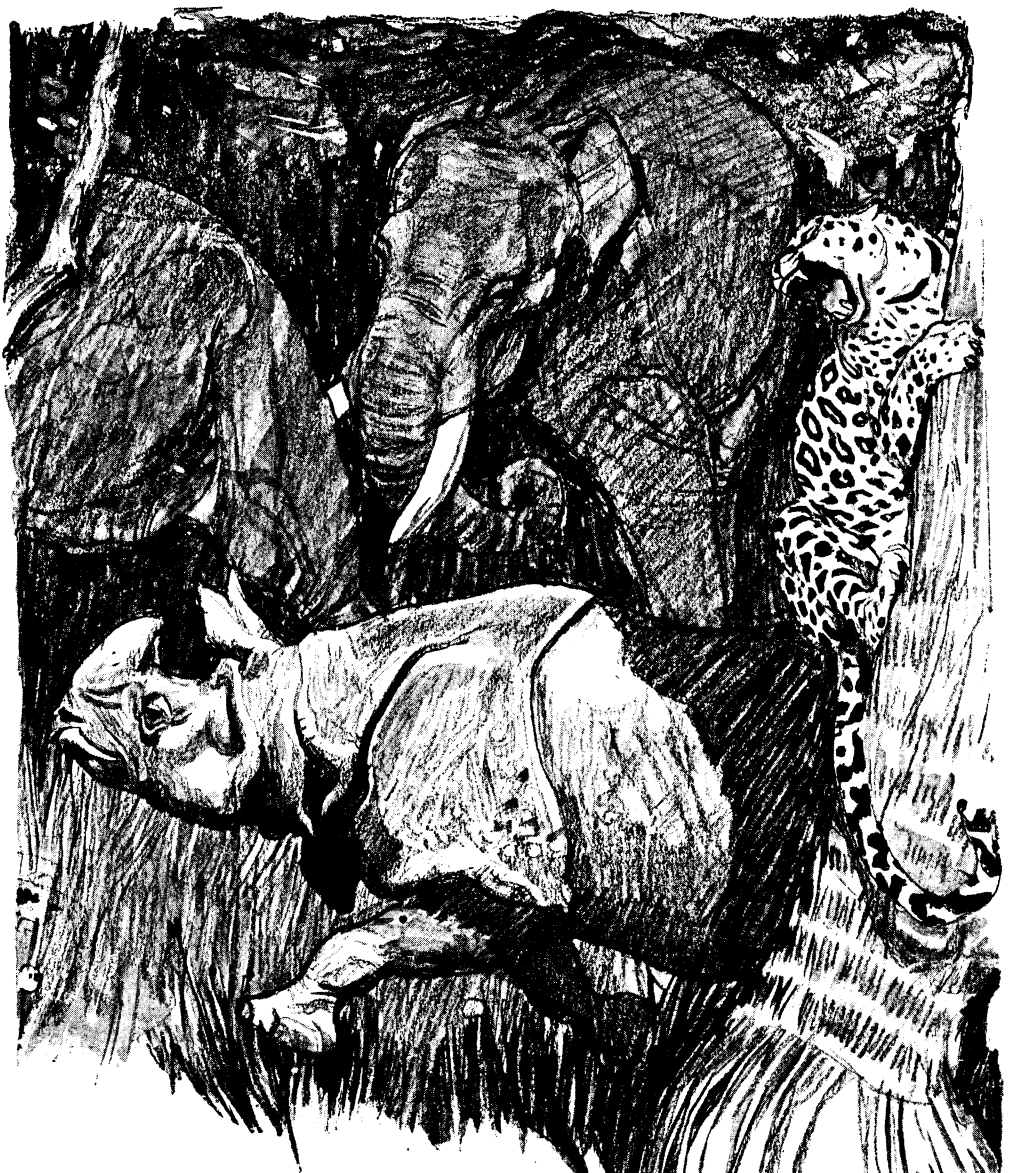
"Herds of wild elephants . . . marched along solemnly, with flapping ears and swinging trunks, the cows and tusks following. In single file they went, each one of the herd

the youngster's pride knew no bounds. He felt ready to face and battle with a universe of foes.

Yet that very noon a family tragedy happened that might have taught him his real insignificance in the scheme of things. He had returned to the brood, which were scattered about a small open patch into which the sun found access. The mother-hen, a stout matron now, lulled by the hot rays, was dozing placidly near a clump of bushes, while her children were idly pecking

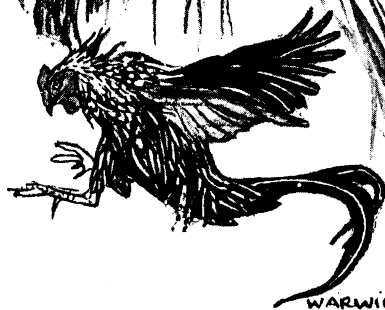
the ground or settling themselves in the warm dust to follow her example. Cock-o'-the-Walk was one of the latter. Drowsing comfortably near her, he chanced to lift a heavy eyelid and saw, without appreciating the meaning of it, the spare blades of grass near his parent quiver and wave slightly in the still air. Out of his half-shut sleepy eye he gazed mechanically.

Suddenly it seemed as if a length of thick rope were flung up from the grass by some invisible power, and, coiling in air, a loop



their calves leading, the big bulls with curved white stepping in the footprints of the animal in front of it."

of it was thrown around the startled hen. With a frightened squawk she fluttered up and strove to fly. But a second coil was as swiftly cast about her, crushing one outstretched wing awry against her body until the bone broke with an audible crack. The deadly clasp tightened, the wretched fowl's cries grew fainter, her frantic struggles ceased, and she collapsed limply. Then a flat, pointed head with beady, unwinking eyes and a forked tongue darting incessantly in and out of the slit-like mouth, was lifted



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from the grass and poised in the air above her. And the terrible snake, a venomous

hamadryad or "king cobra," deadliest and most feared of all serpents, the only one in Asia that will attack a human being unprovoked, heaved itself up above its victim and prepared to devour her. Cock-o'-the-Walk from the high branch on which he had taken refuge—his terrified kindred were still flying with discordant cries through the trees—watched, frightened but inquisitive, his mother's sad end.

The quivering tongue of the slayer licked her limp body all over, covering the ruffled feathers with an oily slime. The snake's head was not as large as the sixth part of its victim—it was not half grown yet, for hamadryads reach a length of sixteen feet and more—and it seemed impossible that the open mouth could engulf the hen or the gullet swallow her. But a snake's jaws are not fixed together at the end, and mouth and throat are capable of enormous distension. So gradually the feathered prey was sucked into the hungry maw and slowly, steadily disappeared from sight. A wide bulge appeared in the king cobra's throat and gradually travelled down until it came to rest in the lower part of the tube-like body. The food had reached the stomach. And the murderer drew back with sinuous motion into the bushes and glided off into retirement until the digestive juices should have done their work, the feathers, bones, feet and all that could not be assimilated had been spewed up and the rest absorbed—a process that might last two or three weeks, during which the full-fed snake would lie comatose and satisfied.

Long before she was thoroughly digested, Cock-o'-the-Walk had forgotten his mother and her awful fate, except in so far as it impressed the necessity of a certain amount of caution where snakes were concerned. The birds and beasts of the jungle lead too busy lives, have to work too hard to secure their daily food, have, most of them, too many dangers to guard against, to leave them time to remember what is past. And the cockerel soon saw other tragedies in his family, other members of it perish with startling suddenness—one pullet fell a victim to a prowling jungle-cat, another squawked out her life with the sharp teeth of a slim, weasel-like little animal with a fluffy tail buried in her throat. The fact that Fate had so far spared him the self-confident young bird ascribed to his own astuteness, and in his conceit he believed that all the credit for it was his.

The dread season of the hot weather now

brooded over India, scorching the luckless land with the fires of hell. Even the forest suffered from the awful heat. The trees shed their leaves just when their shade was most needed, shed them at the very season when in cooler climes their kindred are clad in their densest foliage. So the sun, blazing in a sky of brass, could reach and wither the ground plants of the jungle that, secure in the protection of the thick green canopy overhead, had hitherto defied its power. And the treacherous dry leaves showered down on them and littered the parched earth.

Then one day somewhere—in Assam, mayhap, or on the hidden hills where Mishmi or Abor savage stalks his foe—the forest fires began. Before the hot breath of the wind the crackling lines of flames hurried after their scouts, the blown sparks that heralded their coming and lit other fires to greet them. And the birds and beasts fled in terror before them—not all, for some tarried too long and died like faithful Hindu widows in *suttee* on blazing pyres.

Cock-o'-the-Walk had never imagined that the forest held so many inhabitants as were revealed when the rush for safety began. Herds of wild elephants, fifty to a hundred strong, marched along solemnly with flapping ears and swinging trunks, the cows and their six- or seven-months-old calves leading, the big bulls with curved white tusks following. In single file they went, each one of the herd stepping in the footprints of the animal in front of it, so that from the trail one might think that only a single elephant instead of five score had passed.

Here an ungainly rhinoceros lurched heavily forward, blundering awkwardly through the trees, and more than ready to fight any beast that got in its way. There a herd of bison lumbered on, the big-horned bulls, six feet at the shoulder, rolling their china-blue eyes suspiciously in every direction, the cows patiently shepherding their clumsy calves to keep them from straying. Small families of wild pig shuffled steadily along, the boars flashing the gleaming scimitars of their sharp tusks in warning to the prowling beasts of prey.

For just as in human upheavals the worst elements find their opportunity when calamity overtakes the community, so now, when disaster threatened the forest, those of its dwellers that battered on their neighbours took full advantage of the prevailing chaos. The tiger and panther feasted on

the scared deer and antelopes, while overhead eagle and hawk swooped down with cruel talons on the clouds of harmless birds that fluttered up in air to escape the devouring flames.

But such slaughter only touched the fringe of the masses of fleeing jungle denizens that surged forward irresistibly in search of safety. Fortunately a forest fire moves, on the whole, rather slowly, though here and there, when tinder-dry grass aids it, it can rush on in swift but spasmodic bursts for a short distance. So the bulk of the refugees escaped it as they swept forward in steady flight. And ahead of them all scuttled the alert jungle-fowl, pattering over the dry leaves on nimble feet, except when the roar of oncoming flames sounded unpleasantly near, or the crackling musketry of burning bamboos, exploding as they blazed, startled them into taking to their wings.

Their tribe is very wise, and few of Cock-o'-the-Walk's kind perished in the flames. But it was hard to be driven from their usual haunts and harried day and night by the fear of fire, than which the jungle-world knows no worse terror. The hustled fowl grew thinner when all green things withered and the swarms of winged and crawling insects diminished before the snapping beaks of a myriad birds of every kind or died in the flames and smothering smoke of the burning forest.

But in time all things, bad as well as good, come to an end; and when the heavy downpours of the rainy season killed the devouring fire-demon and brought new life to the woodland, the jungle-fowl were happy once more. A homing instinct drew them back to their old feeding-grounds, and Cock-o'-the-Walk found himself in his birth-place again.

He was a splendid young bird now. There were no gaudy peacocks here to eclipse the brightness of his glossy plumage. From his red comb to his sharp spurs, from his yellow beak to his curving, green tail-feathers, he was as handsome a jungle-cock as ever stalked in the shadow of the Himalayas. He knew his worth, and at dawn and dusk under the trees his challenge to all rivals rang out loud and clear—a challenge that he was ever ready to make good with the sharp weapons with which Nature had dowered him.

One day he was stalking slowly across a glade, stopping now and again to peck the ground in feigned indifference to the admiring

gaze of a trim young hen that coyly tripped across his path. With the lofty condescension of the superior male he was about to address her, when the forest idyll was interrupted by the sudden appearance of an older jungle-cock with four or five wives at his tail.

The new-comer glared haughtily at the young hero, who eyed him defiantly as he recognised him, and in a trice father and son once more faced each other, ready for battle. First the elder threw up his head and crowed a challenge. His offspring answered with clarion notes. With fluffed-out neck-feathers the two duellists circled around each other, now bending forward with stretched-out heads and pointing beaks, now rising erect and flapping their wings. Then with a sudden rush they swept up from the ground and clashed in air, only to drop back baffled to earth. Again and again they flew up, each striving to top the other in order to give the deadly blow of the sharp spur that would decide the fight. Round and around each other they hopped, sparring for an opening. They closed and fell apart, then closed again. Feathers flew in clouds as they whirled up, down and about in furious fight, beak, wing and spur in play. The hens looked on stolidly, only fluttering aside when the course of the battle brought the combatants near them.

The pace was too hot to last. Youth told, and the older cock went down before the fierce assaults of his son, staggered up and fought despairingly, only to have to confess defeat in the end. Bruised, battered, and plucked almost bare, he stumbled blindly across the open glade, while the victor stood a-tiptoe, flapping his wings and proclaiming his triumph to the world.

And the dethroned monarch of his little realm sought unsteadily the shelter of the undergrowth to hide his shame, too overwhelmed to see the baleful light of the green eyes in its shadows that watched his coming. He crept despairingly in among the bushes, and annihilation fell on him as the heavy paw of the hiding leopard crushed him lifeless to earth. And the great spotted cat tore the luckless bird asunder and devoured him hungrily while his conqueror was still voicing his victory and exulting in the submissive admiration of the fickle hens.

It was Cock-o'-the-Walk's greatest day. From now on he truly deserved his name. Now began his soon scarce-disputed reign as king of the jungle-fowl of the neighbourhood. Other rivals at first tried to deny

his sovereignty, but they were forced to bow before the storm of his fury. Before long none dared even crow in his hearing, and if his royal progress brought him their way, the other cocks scuttled to hide ignominiously in the dense undergrowth. Many a hen that attracted his notice went to swell his expanding seraglio, and long before the rains came again to revive the parched forest his progeny were many in the land.

Yet some of his uncounted descendants never lived to break the imprisoning shells and see the green light of day under the leafy canopy. One clutch had been carelessly deposited by an improvident young hen among the bracken in an open space. A dark-hided sambhur stag, fleeing before a hungry tiger, trampled them to nothingness under his horny hoofs. Another lot were laid, according to the best rules of motherhood among the jungle-fowl, under a tree that rose from thorny, twisted undergrowth. But a passing herd of elephants chose to loiter in that locality, and a stout tusker liked the look of the leaves borne by the top branches of that particular tree. So to reach them he laid his broad forehead against its stem and pushed with all the weight of his immense carcass until the roots were torn from the ground and the trunk crashed down on the unlucky eggs and the half-hatched chickens inside them.

But such tragedies affected only the mothers. Cock-o'-the-Walk knew nothing of them and, had he known, would not have cared. Proudly he paraded the forest daily, loudly night and morning he proclaimed his greatness to the awed world, and no denying crow replied.

But undisputed dominion palls on pugnacious autocrats, and this quarrelsome bird wearied of it. He was spoiling for a fight. He would have liked to measure himself against the motionless owls hiding from the light of day in hollow trees, or with the gaily-painted hornbills that passed above the leafy canopy with measured beat of flapping wings.

In search of adventure or fresh feeding-grounds, he took to wandering with his train of obedient hens for long distances. And in hitherto unknown parts of the forest he was sure to encounter new rivals and enjoy the excitement of a fight. And always he was victorious. In a combat he was a furious whirlwind of ferocity, and

the stoutest feathered warriors went down before his fierce onslaughts. He became known to, and feared by, every jungle-cock for miles around his usual haunts.

And boredom fell on him again. For battle was the joy of life to the quarrelsome bird, and he pined when he was deprived of it. He went farther and farther afield in search of it.

At last one day, after a long ramble, he was pecking listlessly at the ever-present, ever-industrious ants, when a loud and arrogant crowing broke the silence of the jungle. Cock-o'-the-Walk drew himself up, a little image of a plumaged war god. Again came the challenging sound. With the feathers rising on his neck, he stretched up his head and gave out his full-throated call to battle. To his indignant amazement it was instantly answered, not from one, but from a dozen quarters. To right, to left, from in front, rang out defiant crows.

It was too much for his proud spirit to endure. Selecting the unseen bird directly before him, he scuttled forward full of fight. The undergrowth lessened as he went on, and soon only scattered low plants veiled the earth. And presently a loud crowing resounded again, and he saw before him a cock, with flapping wings and head held high, pealing out a challenge that fired the little bully's blood. With outstretched neck he dashed at the unknown.

Suddenly he was checked in his rush, throttled, dragged back. Some invisible enemy gripped his throat, pulled him down. He struggled fiercely, madly, fought the unseen foe with all his strength. But the more he did so, the tighter grew the deadly strangle-hold. Choking, gasping for breath, he collapsed. He sprang up again in fresh, furious, but equally futile efforts that only dragged the little feathered body to the ground again to lie exhausted, while the brave heart in it was like to burst with helpless rage. One last wild struggle, and then oblivion.

An hour later a ragged dweller in one of the frail huts in the tiny hamlet hidden in the jungle stooped over poor little Cock-o'-the-Walk and, loosening the thin running noose that had ensnared him, picked up the luckless bird and with a twist of the wrist wrung his neck and ended his brief life. And then the man slouched forward to visit his other snares and to release the tame cocks pegged down outside the village to decoy their wild kinsfolk to their doom.

MOUNTAIN AIR

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY C. FLEMING WILLIAMS

THE girl in the doorway had waited a full two minutes before Blaise Corfield realised her presence. With each second of the time the expression on her small, charming countenance gained a little in hardness, defiance, and antagonism. When at length he lifted his head from the disarray of charts and instruments that littered the big round table, he encountered a glance of definite measured challenge. He met it with a curiously detached steadiness of look that was somehow characteristic and rather arresting.

To Herrick Carstairs it was but another reminder of the fact that this at last was battle-ground. She came forward into the clear light of the centre of the room, and Corfield, who had risen, but still held one of the charts in his hand, must surely have realised that here was no chance encounter, but a deliberate challenge. Standing there, very straight and still, she spoke.

"Is it true that you have persuaded Robin to go with you on this new expedition?"

"It is true that he is going."

"Because you have persuaded him."

He made no reply. She flung out her hand with a little angry gesture towards the contents of the table.

"Do you think I don't know? All this—it is an obsession with you—it always has been! But Robin—d'you think Robin cares about the height of some unknown mountain in the back of beyond?"

"No," said Corfield quietly, "I don't. But he cares enough for the adventure of the thing, and that, after all, suffices."

"He wouldn't have cared for that if you hadn't persuaded him," she persisted. "You—it is all very well for you. It is your life, exploring—your career." She paused, and into the man's steady eyes came an odd gleam that revealed the truth of her words. For to Blaise Corfield, it seemed, that litter of papers and instruments held the key to life itself—a life of great open

spaces, far, remote camp-fires, and mountain trails that led to loneliness, hardship, and the everlasting snows.

Such a life, perhaps, as should have shed the glamour of romance upon the man who lived it. For Robin, apparently, it had. Herrick, clenching her slim hands, had told herself passionately that it was that she had to fight—the sort of Pied Piper fascination that threatened to claim her old playfellow and comrade.

For the past twelve years Corfield had been, in the intervals of his wanderings, an accepted guest at her uncle's house, where she, too, spent so much of her time, and where young Robin Graham, their nearest neighbour, had been her constant companion. Robin's boyish hero-worship for the man who measured mountains had been inevitable, but not until now had Herrick realised how much it meant. But half an hour ago, as they rode together, Robin had told her joyously of his "splendid plan." He had joined Corfield's next expedition, and it would be "no end sport."

Herrick had said little then—pride and the shock of it restrained her—but her fighting spirit, swiftly armed, sent her at once to Blaise Corfield.

"You have persuaded him," she repeated. "But for you, he would never have dreamed of it. But for you, things would have gone on just—just the same, and——" She stopped abruptly, conscious that he was looking at her curiously and very keenly.

"And?" he prompted.

But she left the sentence unfinished, and the colour deepened in her face. With a fresh intensity of anger she realised that he was construing her argument, in all simplicity, into the personal one of her determination to keep Robin. It had been a tacit conclusion, since they were children together, that she and Robin should marry, but somehow that Corfield should have recalled the fact—though equally tacitly—was intolerable.

She heard his quiet voice. "It'll take two years—or three months longer at the outside. Then Robin will come back to—England."

That second's pause before the last word betrayed the fact that he had been going to say "to you." She looked at him defiantly.

"Two years—two of the best years of his life, just because you have persuaded him that he cares for a thing in which he has no real interest whatever!"

"You—cannot answer that."

She gave a little scornful laugh. That he should doubt her complete understanding of Robin was so utterly absurd. As if she didn't know for what Robin cared—the life that suited him, as it had suited his father before him—no roving life of high adventure, but that of a country gentleman possessed of no inconsiderable estate in a sporting country. Robin had served his country in War time as faithfully as Corfield himself, and now would "settle down." What right had this man to seek to order it otherwise—this man with his odd, uncomfortable enthusiasm for the unknown outposts of the earth?

"You forget that Robin at least owes some duty to the estate, especially in these days."

He met that as he might have met the unexpected wisdom and dignity of a small child—with a quick, kindly smile.

"Fellowes managed that well enough before Robin was of age and during the War. He is an excellent agent." He forbore to add that Robin's recent attitude to the estate had hardly been one of marked interest, for Robin had been much in Town. The smile was gone in an instant, and as he replaced the chart on the table, Corfield's face was once more the almost wooden mask of detached indifference by which men knew him.

Herrick played her last card. "It seems so funny that you should want him to go when he doesn't really care."

And to that Corfield made no reply at all. There was a long silence, broken only by the lash and patter of the cold spring rain without. The room was slipping into grey shadows, but it was light enough for them to see each other's faces.

"When do you sail?" said Herrick at last.

"On the seventh."

And this was the fifth.

Herrick went away.

II.

ROBIN's car whirled up the drive half an hour later, and Robin flung himself into one of the big chairs in the twilight hall, announced that he had been in Town, "buyin' glad rags to impress the yaks and Barbary sheep," and had found the process exhausting.

Herrick, from where she sat at the tea-table, saw Blaise Corfield glance at the younger man as he spoke, and something in the keenness of the look piqued her as much as his previous detached indifference had done. Corfield's only comment was a practical one anent some special make of boots, which Robin answered with cheerful carelessness. He did not look in the least "exhausted," his boyish, good-looking countenance lacked nothing of its usual debonair gaiety.

And he was, it appeared, almost violently enthusiastic over the prospective adventure. He talked of it with irrepressible anticipation, and Herrick sat back in the shadows, very quiet, yet always ready with a laugh for Robin's nonsensical extravagance, and hating—hating Blaise Corfield all the time.

She heard her uncle say presently, "You'll come to-morrow to say good-bye?" and saw the boy glance at Corfield before he replied, in a voice suddenly hesitant and awkward—

"I'm awfully sorry, but I'm afraid I can't manage it. That's why I came over to-night, hoping to find everybody here." He smiled at Herrick. "You see, we both have to be in Town to-morrow—Corfield and I—and then we shall sleep there and go down to Southampton early on Thursday. Everything's fixed." He spoke, somehow, as if he did not want to contemplate the possibility of any alteration in their plans—Corfield's plans, thought Herrick bitterly.

It was Corfield's plan, surely, that contrived that Herrick should not see Robin alone again before he left. The contriving was done simply and naturally enough, for, after all, despite that tacit conclusion, she had no definite privilege in such small yet subtly important matters, and pride at least prevented her claiming one.

So Robin went, and it is to be presumed that the man who had achieved his end was satisfied.

Corfield himself left on the following morning, and he, by chance or design, had the opportunity he had denied to Robin. For Herrick was alone in the big hall as he entered, ready for departure. He went

across to her, grave in his victory achieved, and said quietly—

"Robin shall come back in two years' time—I promise you that." He held out his hand. "I don't suppose we shall see one another again, so good-bye."

She stared at him, wide-eyed and startled in spite of herself. "What do you mean? Aren't you coming back, too, when the expedition's over?"

"Very likely not—not, at least, to your part of the world."

"Oh!" said Herrick blankly. She could read nothing in his still, weathered countenance, but the quick suspicion born of her anger with him took a new line. She returned to her interrupted occupation of filling a slim glass on the window-sill with long-stemmed pink anemones, and she did not appear to see Corfield's outstretched hand at all.

For a moment he looked at her half-averted face—at the exquisite line of throat and chin that was one of her great beauties, at the clear and delicate colouring that was somehow akin to the freshness of the spring morning—then he turned and went out to the waiting car.

Before the sound of its departure had died away, Herrick had left her flowers and run to the telephone. Whatever her errand there, it was apparently satisfactory, for my lady hung up the receiver looking well pleased.

III.

THE eastward-bound liner was twenty-four hours on her way when Blaise Corfield, leaning on the rail in the grey spring dusk, reflected grimly on the obvious though unspoken fact that Robin had made a by no means favourable impression on the other members of the expedition. The latter were tried men, purposeful and keen, but they were just; it wasn't Robin's youth and inexperience that had told against him, but some quality sensed beneath the attraction of his surface charm. Corfield knew quite well that they found his choice of a fifth member of the expedition inexplicable, but he kept his own counsel. When he turned abruptly from his contemplation of grey sea and cloud-wracked sky, his face was still grim. But he was thinking—not of Robin, but of Herrick, as she had stood in the morning sunlight and ignored his outstretched hand.

He went, in search of Robin, to the music-room, and found, not Robin, but a dark-haired girl in a frock of mist-blue brocade—

a girl who had refused him the conventional courtesy of her hand two days ago.

"You?"

And Herrick smiled.

"We're coming as far as Tunis with you," she said, "Aunt Phyllis and I. Isn't it a jolly surprise? It's always such fun to do things like that. You see, when you told me the name of the boat, I remembered that uncle knew Commodore Wainwright quite well. I got on the 'phone, and found we could get a cabin. And I persuaded Aunt Phyllis—she's always sporting, and she's been talking of going to Tunis for so long. It all fitted in so well, didn't it?"

"Excellently," Corfield agreed. He did not ask her for any explanation at all, for he knew well enough what had prompted this amazing action, and that, lightly as she spoke of it, it wasn't the irresponsible caprice of a child, but the passionate move of a woman with the fighting spirit. It was her last effort to prevent Robin from going with the expedition.

He looked at her, realising that, and some resultant train of thought gave his mouth a grim twist. But he said nothing. For it would seem that until then he had not fully understood how much this thing meant to her. He had thought of her as a girl piqued and angry at the success of what she looked upon as his persuasion of Robin, and suddenly he saw her as a woman who fought because she loved. But he did not mean her to win.

A moment later they were joined by the obliging Aunt Phyllis and Robin himself.

All that evening Corfield watched the boy relentlessly. Robin's opinion of the affair was not apparent; he accepted it with an easy complacency that sent an odd gleam into Corfield's quiet eyes, and his manner at least gave no hint of that which even then must have been a half-formed decision.

Three days later—on the evening of their leaving Marseilles—Aunt Phyllis came to Corfield, looking perturbed and scared.

"Mr. Corfield, I don't understand it! Robin went ashore this morning, and he didn't come back. It wasn't a mistake. The purser says he'd told him he had to return to Paris. Of course the purser thought we knew. He's taken all his personal luggage—he had it re-labelled to Paris. He must have got it done at the last possible minute. But what does it mean?"

Which question Corfield did not attempt to answer. He countered it with another, curt and harsh: "Where's Herrick?"

For the thing that leapt to his mind was a natural conclusion enough.

Aunt Phyllis answered him distractedly: "She—I've scarcely seen her all day. I've had a headache, and I've been resting. I thought she was with the Marriotts. She and Gwen Marriott, you know, are great friends, and Gwen Marriott——"

But Corfield didn't want to hear about Gwen Marriott. He wanted to know if Herrick—— Was this her victory, after all? Then he turned and saw her, a slender white-clad figure with grave eyes and a smiling mouth, and an air and poise that somehow spoke of triumph.

Yet she hadn't gone with Robin, she hadn't gone with Robin!

The words rang in Corfield's brain, but it was Aunt Phyllis who spoke.

"Oh, my dear, we were wondering—Mr. Corfield and I—we can't understand it! Did *you* know—but of course you didn't, or you'd have said so, wouldn't you? But Robin's landed at Marseilles and gone back to Paris. What *does* it mean?"

"Mean?" echoed Herrick. Her head was tilted back and her eyes flashed defiance. "Why, it means that Robin's not going, after all!"

"But, my dear, after everything was settled! It—it seems so odd. And without a word to any of us! Supposing—supposing the poor boy has lost his memory! People *do*, you know. Supposing he can't remember who he is or where he came from! Supposing——"

But at this point her flights of imagination were interrupted by the appearance of a steward with a note for Corfield.

He read it through and thrust it into his pocket. "Robin hasn't lost his memory," he said quietly. "He's—changed his mind—that's all." And he did not look at Herrick.

The elder Miss Carstairs protested hysterically that it was so very odd. Finding both Corfield and Herrick strangely averse to analysing Robin's possible motives, she eventually drifted away to seek consolation elsewhere, and to indulge in a flight of ingenious imagination that lifted Robin from mere aberration to affairs of international intrigue.

Herrick, left alone with Corfield, made no attempt to break a long silence, but waited for him to admit defeat with an odd little air of indifference that was perhaps only the relaxed tension of a hard-won victory. And Corfield, with Robin's letter an

inexorable goad, faced the disillusioning of the girl whose happiness mattered so much.

He gave her the letter to read, and Herrick, as she took it, saw for the second time the look that had come to his face that afternoon in the library. Then he turned away, because he knew her victory was a gathering of Dead Sea fruit. . . .

Robin's explanation scrawled untidily over three pages—a curious record of apology, defiance, and excuse. He knew that he'd never stick the life—it wasn't any good—he ought never to have said he'd go. Somehow he'd not realised at the time what it would mean—exile from all the things he simply couldn't live without. It was all very well for Corfield, but you couldn't expect everyone to like the same things. (By "things" it would appear that he meant that life of which Herrick had been quite unaware.) He'd gone to Paris because Delphine Arnold—did Corfield remember her dancing in London?—was fulfilling an engagement there, and he was going to marry Delphine. The writer added, with a touch of sullen malice, that he did not think Corfield would be really much surprised. And to Herrick or Miss Carstairs he did not allude at all. . . .

That tacit conclusion had, after all, never crystallised into a definite arrangement, but the irony of it remained—the irony of Herrick's reckless determination to prevent Robin from going with Corfield—and this her success.

She gave him back the letter, and said slowly, in a very quiet little voice—

"Then Major Sherwood was right."

"Sherwood?" Corfield looked at her blankly, hiding an odd relief at the sound of her voice with surprise at her mention of the second-in-command of the expedition. Herrick lifted her head and looked at him gravely with a clear-eyed steadiness that was quite free from either triumph or indifference.

"Major Sherwood spoke to me last night about Robin's going on the expedition. Somehow he'd found out that I—that I tried to prevent him—and that I—blamed you. He said he wasn't going to let me do you such an injustice, even if I were five times as angry with him for interfering. I *was* angry, of course," she said reflectively. "And he was rather rude. He said what I wanted was a little common-sense plain speaking, so he gave it me." She paused, and at the corners of her mouth quivered a wholly incomprehensible smile. But her

eyes, wide and dark, held Corfield's with unflinching gravity. "Was it true that you wanted Robin to go out there because—because you thought it would make him—different? Because you knew the—kind of things that he really cared about—the things we—I never guessed? Because

endeavour—the things that make a man—you meant to give Robin a sort of—of cure by mountain air, didn't you? And all the time, because I didn't understand, I hated you, and did all I could to fight you." She paused, then suddenly looked away from him out at the blue horizon. "Why did



"'You?' And Herrick smiled. 'We're coming as far as Tunis with you,' she said."

they weren't the things that—make a man, and you wanted Robin to be a man—the kind that counts? Is that true?"

Corfield said harshly: "Confound Sherwood and his interference! He'd no right——"

But she interrupted him. "No, I'll be grateful to Major Sherwood as long as I live. It is true. He made me understand what a fool I'd been. Two years of hardship and

it matter so much to you what Robin was?" she demanded.

And Corfield answered curtly: "Because you cared for Robin."

"Oh!" She drew a long breath and shook her head, still keeping towards him that very charming profile. "I thought I did—I thought that was why I fought you. But it wasn't. And, anyway, that is only half an answer, isn't it?"

"Herrick!" he said, and checked a movement towards her, one hand gripping the rail.

She said calmly: "You—you'll have to tell me the other half before we get to Tunis. Because the expedition is going to take two years, isn't it?"

"Yes." He was, it would seem, a practical person. But he added, with an odd new note in his voice: "If it can possibly be managed in less—why, we'll do it! And then——" He broke off, watching her half-averted face.

"If I hadn't come," said Herrick quietly, "I wonder if I should have found out—the truth. He—Major Sherwood—evidently

didn't think so." Once more the smile trembled on her lips. "I—I've got a better opinion of him than he has of me. If mountain air makes men like him and—and you——" Suddenly she turned to Corfield. "Because you thought I cared for Robin . . ." she said. "That's half the reason, isn't it?"

But Corfield did not wait until Tunis to tell her the other half, which, indeed, she had known for the past ten minutes. Being ever a taciturn person, and the place where they stood being quite deserted, he did not tell her in so many words, but Herrick found the completed reason a good one and absolutely satisfying.



A MIDSUMMER SLUMBER-SONG.

ROSE and gold refract the sun,
 Rose and gold reflect the moon,
 Rose and gold, when day is done,
 To the sea's low lullaby-tune
 Sleep.

Rose of rest-harrow, bindweed, briar,
 Trefoil's, hawkweed's, stonecrop's gold,
 Answering the sunset fire,
 Echoing the moonbeams cold,
 Sleep.

Rose and gold across the sky,
 Rose and gold along the earth,
 Roof and cover me when I,
 Having found what life is worth,
 Sleep.

MAY BYRON.



"Mrs. Gregory, red-eyed but composed, was sent upstairs to bring down their bags."

PERSONAL EFFECTS

By A. WHATOFF ALLEN

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

PROGRESS has a habit of exacting full payment for the boons it confers, and Humanity only advances over the corns of its less fortunate members.

The Massinghams must be numbered among the victims of Progress. Just as it was Progress that produced the phonograph and set neighbour against neighbour, and all mankind against the piccolo player, so was it Progress that introduced wire-less telegraphy and the ballroom tango, and sent the marital bliss of the Massinghams tottering and crumbling to its fall.

Until the coming of these epoch-making discoveries neither Joyce nor Roger had experienced any Transatlantic doubts as to the wisdom of wedlock. Right up to the day when Roger first climbed through the spare-room window with a coil of wire, kicked a tile off the roof, and dropped his hammer through the conservatory, Joyce had loved to rumple his hair, to fill his pipe for him, and to squeeze herself into the same armchair, and Roger had never ceased to wonder that he of all mortal creatures should be deemed worthy of receiving these paradisiacal ministrations.

From the moment that he set foot upon the sill of the spare-room window, Joyce was conscious of a change in him. His air became abstracted and his conversation cryptic. He spoke, for instance, of wave-lengths, of circuits, of insulation, of terminals, and there were usually nails or screws in his mouth. He would spend whole evenings pencilling cabalistic signs on a slip of paper and muttering strange words to himself. For hours on end he would tramp about the roof.

Joyce became morbid over it. If she suggested a theatre or a dance, Roger invariably dismissed the thought of such frivolity and pleaded an urgent appointment with Chelmsford or the Eiffel Tower. If she played the piano, she was inevitably accused of throwing Marconi House out of gear, of short-circuiting Lympne, or of thoughtlessly upsetting in some way the stability of the ether. Life became increasingly difficult, and inevitably she began to visualise the future. She saw ahead of her long years of complete insulation. She pictured herself, white-haired and wrinkled, sitting alone by the fireside and fretting

herself into a fever lest Roger should stay too long on the house-top and go down again with his rheumatics. Æons during which the spare-room window must be perpetually open stretched out before her, and then there rose up the picture of Roger, old and toothless, his mouth still full of screws, tapping out the Morse code with his walking-stick and querulously babbling of wave-lengths as he tottered along beside her.

As a result of that appalling vision, Joyce allowed her mind to dally with thoughts of the ballroom tango. If Roger had lost all zest for the frivolities of life, she had not. Wrinkles and grey hairs were disfigurements not to be meekly accepted without a struggle to avoid them. She announced her intention of taking lessons, and suggested that Roger might do worse than join her. But Roger confessed to a detestation of new-fangled dance steps—of any dance steps, for that matter. Besides, Brussels was broadcasting that night. He couldn't understand how Joyce could possibly want to go gallivanting off to a footling dancing class when she might stay at home and listen-in to Brussels. But of course she never had displayed the slightest interest in his hobby. He had given up expecting anything but ridicule of it from her.

Even for Roger, Joyce could not bring herself to face the possibility of the wrinkles of her vision. She took her lessons in the tango, and it was the fact that when practising in the drawing-room she shook the floor and inadvertently plunged Plymouth into a state of chaotic disorganisation that precipitated the present crisis.

Anyone could see with half an unspectacled myopic eye that the crisis had arrived. Joyce, very cold, very distant, very haughty, with tilted chin and supercilious upper lip, was standing on the hearth-rug, nervously fingering the ornaments on the mantelpiece. Roger, sprawling in an arm-chair, smoked his pipe with studied nonchalance and perused the pages of his wireless text-book. Both of them had come to the same distressing conclusion. In the words of Joyce, their steps didn't fit; as Roger expressed it, they couldn't hit on the right wave-length. Love, in fact, had fluttered out of the spare-room window.

"You see, things can't go on as they are indefinitely," said Joyce. "We're doing the only possible thing for both of us."

"Quite," agreed Roger.

Joyce tapped impatiently with her foot.

Roger's willing acquiescence was rather galling; she felt that a little simulated reluctance would have been more tactful. Not that she was altogether deceived by his air of indifference. She knew, for instance, that in his normal condition he would not be champing at the stem of his pipe as he was champing at it now.

"I want to have things quite clear," she went on coolly. "I want you to understand that we are separating for good. We shall be entirely independent of each other. I shall not expect you to interest yourself in my doings—in fact, I shall resent any interference. You are to dismiss me from your life—forget me as completely as I propose to forget you. It's no good doing things by halves. As far as you are concerned, I simply shan't exist."

Roger bit his pipe with renewed savagery. "No, of course not," he replied. "That's perfectly obvious."

"There will be business matters to be settled," Joyce continued, in the same level voice, "closing up the house and all that. There are a few things I should like sent on to me."

"Better write down your address," suggested Roger.

"Quite unnecessary," Joyce assured him. "Any communications to or from either of us can pass through the lawyers. They quite understand the position. I rang them up this morning and told them where they could get into touch with me in an emergency. They realise that under no conditions are they to divulge my address to you without my permission."

"Isn't that rather—drastic? I mean, you never know—in case of illness——"

"If I am ill, Roger," she replied firmly, "I shall certainly not send for you. I don't want to rake up the past, but your bedside manner——" She laughed rather bitterly and shrugged her shoulders. "Frankly, I simply couldn't stand you tramping about on the leads."

Roger turned a page viciously.

"And if you're ill, Roger," she went on, "it will never do for me to visit you. I might forget myself and dance round the bedroom, and shake the bed and upset you as well as Lympe."

Roger sat up suddenly and removed his pipe. "Look here, Joyce," he began angrily, "if you want to start the whole squabble over again——"

But she cut him short with a wave of her hand. "Not at all," she answered suavely.

"There's no need. Everything is settled. There's only one other point I must insist on: we must leave the house at the same time. That will be fair to both of us. If we leave together, no one can accuse either of us of having run away from the other. Everyone will understand that we parted by mutual agreement, and there will be no scandal."

Roger subsided into his chair again and replaced his pipe. "Just as you wish," he replied frigidly.

Joyce glanced at her watch. "I don't think there's anything else," she said. "I must go and pack now. I shall be leaving at five o'clock. I suppose you can be ready?"

Roger grunted his assent, and Joyce, crossing the room, paused with her hand on the knob of the door.

"I've ordered the taxi to be here at five," she said.

Again Roger grunted.

"Two taxis," added Joyce, and closed the door behind her.

Roger sprang to his feet, glared at the door with murder in his eye, and savagely hurled his wireless text-book at the opposite wall. Then, without the slightest apparent provocation, he kicked the sofa.

* * * * *

At this stage, if you are of a cynical turn of mind, you will shrug your shoulders and say "Of course!" You will see in the domestic *débâcle* of the Massinghams the perfectly normal and inevitable climax of eighteen months of married life. If, on the other hand, you are like Mrs. Gregory, it is a moral certainty that your heart has been wrung by the untimely shattering of love's young dream, and a tear of compassion has perhaps splashed down upon the printed page.

Beneath Mrs. Gregory's ample bodice of black satin there beat the heart of a sentimentalist. Despite her grey hairs there were true-lovers' knots embroidered on her counterpane, and now and again, when in her moments of self-revelation she would refer to "My Albert," whom an attack of typhoid had transformed from a blasphemous bo'sun into a beatific memory, the tone of her voice gave a sure indication of her capacity for emotion.

When Joyce, with a matter-of-fact, casual air, announced to her the coming dissolution of the Massingham *ménage*, Mrs. Gregory flushed, paled, clasped her hands, blinked, blew her nose and was requested

not to snivel. As if she could help snivelling! Hadn't she danced Master Roger to Banbury Cross on her knee? Hadn't she buttoned him into his first pair of trousers? Hadn't she taught him to wash behind his ears and not to soak his bread in his gravy? When a woman has been present at your first bath, your baptism, and your wedding, and has confidently counted on being present at your burial, surely she has earned the right to snivel over you if she has a mind to do so?

For some time past Mrs. Gregory had been aware that the love match which had at first radiated so brilliant a light was burning less brightly. Often, as she lay in the darkness in her bower of true-lovers' knots, she had sorrowed over the chasm which she saw widening between "the two dear young things, and them once so crazy on each other and all"; but never had she visualised a climax quite so cataclysmic as this. As she retired to the kitchen, after listening to Joyce's matter-of-fact announcement of the impending catastrophe, courageously suppressing her desire to snivel, her sentimental heart was wrung with pity. "Them poor, dear, young things!" she exclaimed, as she sank into a chair by the stove. "Them poor, dear, foolish young things! Master Roger on his high horse and the mistress with a keep-your-distance-you're-nothing-to-me look about her, and the house to be shut up, and orders coming from the lawyers. . ."

To Mrs. Gregory the end of a romance was indeed the end of the world.

* * * * *

At five o'clock, when the two taxis drew up, Joyce and Roger were ready and waiting in the hall. Mrs. Gregory, red-eyed but composed, was sent upstairs to bring down their bags.

Roger impatiently tapped his shoe with his walking-stick and peered at the barometer.

"It's going to be fine, Roger, isn't it?" remarked Joyce, as she buttoned up her gloves.

Roger, without replying, swung away from the barometer, opened the front door, glared at the waiting taxis, and hissed a tune through his teeth. Joyce buttoned up her gloves for the fourth time.

"What on earth is the woman doing?" demanded Roger, with sudden irritation. "It doesn't take all this time to fetch down a couple of bags."

At that moment Mrs. Gregory appeared

with a bag in each hand, and carried them down the steps. Joyce turned to Roger and held out her hand.

"Well, good-bye, Roger," she said.

Roger took her hand. "Joyce—you're—you're quite sure? I mean—later on—you might want to come back——"

Joyce, pale and very solemn, shook her head. "I shan't come back—ever," she said slowly. "My mind is made up, and I shan't change. If I felt that there was any chance of your caring for me again or of my caring for you, I shouldn't go. As it is—— Roger, please, you're hurting my fingers!"

He loosed her hand, and together they walked down the steps, got into their respective taxis, and were driven away in opposite directions.

Mrs. Gregory waited until the taxis had disappeared, and then mounted the steps, shut the door, and returned to her seat by the kitchen fire. But it was not the same Mrs. Gregory that had sat there less than an hour ago. She was no longer snivelling. The

round her lips, those little puckers—could she possibly be smiling?

* * * * *

Joyce, when she reached the little country hotel which she had chosen as her temporary address, ate a hurried supper and retired to her room. Throwing herself into an armchair, she lighted a cigarette and sighed



"Roger leaned across the bed and gazed at it in stupefied amazement."

look of blank despair had given place to one of placid contentment. There was an appearance of buoyancy about her, of serene confidence, almost of triumph. And, surely,

with relief. The ordeal which, despite her studied air of indifference, she had dreaded more than she would own even to herself, was over. She was unutterably thankful

that she had at last summoned up the courage to take the plunge. The series of petty differences and paltry squabbles which had made up her life with Roger for the last six months had tried her patience to its utmost limit, and she felt that her suggestion that they should separate by mutual agreement had only precipitated a climax which sooner or later was inevitable. Her timely action had probably saved both of them from a good deal of unpleasantness

she married him as she had never dreamed that she could love anyone, and Roger had been almost fierce in his adoration of her.



"Then why," she demanded, with a ring of triumph in her voice, "why did you pack that in your best striped shirt?"

later on. It was strange, she thought, how tremendously one could alter within a few months. She had loved Roger when

She supposed they had cared for each other too intensely, put each other on pedestals, expected too much of each other. She had

heard of cases like that—fierce fires that soon burn themselves out, leaving only dead ashes. But she had felt so secure, so sure that their love was of a higher, more enduring type than that. Yet here she was, alone, and rejoicing in her loneliness, and somewhere or other—she was still a trifle puzzled to understand why she didn't care where—Roger was rejoicing, too. It was all very strange and very muddling.

Roger, of course, was largely to blame, but not entirely. Something inexplicable had happened to Roger. He had changed. Whether he could help changing she didn't know. She supposed not. But the fact remained that he had changed so completely that she no longer recognised him, no longer loved him. Frankly, she disliked him. That, no doubt, was because he took no trouble to conceal the fact that his love for her was reduced to dead ashes. If he had still loved her, she, perhaps, would have kept her love for him. Love was like that—mutual, interdependent. She began to speculate whether, supposing Roger had still loved her and she had ceased to love him, she ought to have kept up the appearance of loving him or told him the truth. It was a nice problem. She supposed that if Roger really loved her, if she were quite sure that—

With sudden impatience she threw her cigarette into the fireplace and got up from her chair. What, after all, did it matter? Roger, in some unaccountable way, had ceased to love her and had killed her love for him. Roger was done with, and in any case she was too tired to worry over it to-night. She would go to bed and think things out in the morning.

She lifted her bag on to the bed, unstrapped it, opened it, and plunged for her nightdress. She knew just where she had put it—down there in the right-hand corner. Her fingers located something that felt like it. She gave a tug, brought it to the surface, and uttered a quick gasp of surprise. Holding it at arm's length, she gazed at it in bewilderment. How on earth had the coat of Roger's pyjamas found its way into her bag?

She frowned, threw it aside, and turned to examine the bag. The appalling truth was all too evident: she had come away with Roger's luggage!

"Mrs. Gregory!" she exclaimed, with an impatient stamp of her foot. "The blundering old idiot!"

She stood for a few moments lost in

thought. It was not so bad as it might be. She could make shift in Roger's pyjamas for one night. But there were other things. . . . She began to unpack systematically, spreading the articles on the bed.

A hair brush was her first important find. That was something to be thankful for. She remembered, as she laid it down, that Roger would only use that particular scented hair wash. He always smelt of it at breakfast. She unearthed a tie—a dazzling study in contrasts of pink and green and scarlet. A club tie, Roger said—swimming or something—as if the violation of artistic canons were the prerogative of a club. He always wore that particular atrocity with his sports coat. It was a sort of week-end vestment, put on with due ceremonial with Saturday's soft collar. A pair of socks followed. Instinctively she unwrapped them and pushed her hand inside. Of course there were holes in the toes. Roger always made holes with his big toes. Once upon a time—centuries ago—she had actually been thrilled to mend them. Funny how one changes!

Item by item she emptied the bag. It was a long business. The bag was packed full with reminiscences. Each article brought to her mind some disturbing little characteristic of Roger, and as she handled them her thoughts went wandering among the scenes which they conjured up. His razor. Roger made such a mess in the bathroom when he shaved—lather all over the place and splashes on the looking-glass. He used to borrow her face-cream or use her powder after shaving. His pipe. She lingered a long time over his pipe, feeling with her fingertips the marks on the stem where he had bitten it. She sniffed at it and made a little *moue*. Roger's coat used to smell like that when she squeezed beside him in the arm-chair. The wireless text-book was there. She sighed as she threw it on the bed.

It was at the very bottom of the bag that she found it—wrapped in a shirt to keep it from breaking—the one she had had taken specially for him when they were engaged. It was not a very good one, she had thought, but Roger had always liked it. She remembered going with him to buy the frame. Roger had been too silly about it, insisting that if he couldn't get a gold frame for it he would have no frame at all. "Gold to match your hair," he had said, "and a little flower in blue enamel to match your eyes." And here it was! Funny creatures, men! Fancy taking that with him! It

would hardly help him to forget. Could it be—was it possible that he didn't want—

She seated herself again in the chair and held the photograph in front of her, gazing at it earnestly as if to wrest from it the reason of its presence in Roger's bag. But she did not see it. She was thinking and wondering, hoping, doubting, striving to understand.

* * * * *

Joyce, carrying Roger's bag, let herself in with her latchkey the following morning and went straight up to her bedroom. There were things she had to have. She could not, for instance, go on indefinitely wearing pyjamas that had evidently been cut for a well-developed elephant. But it would not take more than ten minutes to collect the few articles she required and stuff them into a bag. She would tell Mrs. Gregory to send Roger's things on to him—through the lawyers. Roger, of course, would send on hers through the same channel.

As she entered the room she received a vague impression of wild disorder—of her clothes, which she had carefully packed, spread all over the bed, and of her bag lying open on the floor. Then she saw Roger, standing by the wardrobe, gazing solemnly at a silk jumper, which he held by its shoulders at arm's length in front of him.

And just as she stepped forward he crumpled it up, and his big, broad shoulders shook.

"Roger!" she exclaimed. "What—what—what are you doing?"

Roger dropped the jumper and, as he turned towards her, made a furtive effort to kick it under the bed.

"You took my bag," he explained sheepishly. "I've come back to get a few things. I shan't be ten minutes."

Joyce nodded. "I've brought your property back," she said. "It's all in the bag." She placed it on the floor and glanced towards the bed. "I think the least you can do is to pack my things up again," she suggested. "The whole thing is very annoying. If you remember, I was strongly opposed to having two bags exactly alike. It was just one of those absurdly sentimental ideas of yours."

Roger nodded and seated himself on the edge of the bed. "I know," he said penitently. "It was poetry—too much poetry. Do you know, Joyce, when I was engaged to you I used to sit up at nights and read Byron and Shelley, and gaze

at the moon through the open window, and wonder if you were doing the same."

"I wasn't," Joyce assured him.

"No, of course not. But I used to do it. It was ridiculous, really. Moonlight and Byron make a chap too—too—too sloppy. Of course I got over that. It's a phase. We all go through it. Later on I grew out of it—took a more practical, common-sense view of things. I gave up sitting at an open window and reading poetry by moonlight—"

"And took to sitting on the roof and sucking screws," she interrupted. "But it didn't cure you of being sentimental, Roger, did it?" Her voice had lost its harshness. There was a new note in it.

Roger glanced at her quickly, but Joyce was bending down and unstrapping the bag.

"Oh, absolutely!" he assured her.

Joyce straightened herself. "Then why," she demanded, with a ring of triumph in her voice, holding out the photograph in its golden frame, "why did you pack that in your best striped shirt?"

Roger leaned across the bed and gazed at it in stupefied amazement for fully half a minute, and then he jumped to his feet and began to rummage among the chaos on the bed.

"And why," he demanded, thrusting towards her a framed photograph of himself, "why did you pack that in your best silk jumper?"

Joyce snatched it from him, glanced at it, and threw it on the bed.

"I didn't!" she flashed. Her cheeks were scarlet, her hands clenched. "I didn't pack it!"

But Roger was advancing round the end of the bed. Joyce watched him, fascinated, trembling, helpless, suddenly fearful lest he should stop or turn back from her.

But Roger came close to her, placed a huge hand on each of her shoulders and gazed eagerly into her eyes.

"Joyce," he said slowly, "you're a lovely little liar! You did pack it. Own up!"

Joyce's arms refused to obey her. She strove to keep them pinned to her sides. But slowly, very slowly, they raised themselves and stole round Roger's neck.

"Roger," she whispered, "I own up. I did pack it. I really am a lovely little liar!"

* * * * *

Mrs. Gregory is ready to tell the story

on the slightest provocation, and she always concludes in much the same way.

"And when I went into the bedroom," she will tell you, "there they were sitting on the bed, with the room in a regular higgledy-piggledy muddle, billing and cooing like a couple of doves, which they are, bless 'em! But what might have happened if I hadn't thought of popping them two photos in their bags, I wouldn't dare venture to picture."

Mrs. Gregory, be it noted, gives no credit to that kindly Providence which watches

over our footsteps and guides them into the wrong taxi.

* * * * *

Progress has a habit of exacting full payment for the boons it confers, as witness the fact that Roger is now engaged in initiating Joyce into the mysteries of the Morse code; and Humanity only advances over the corns of its less fortunate members, as is daily being proved by the experiences of Joyce as she guides the unskilled feet of Roger through the intricacies of the tango.

MY MOTHER'S SHIP.

ONCE on a time she sailed the seas,
A royal argosy,
And many a little singing breeze
Brought news of her to me.

The treasure that she bore away,
From lands of Heart's Desire,
Stirred my young fancy every day
And set my brain on fire.

Have I not watched with wistful eyes,
And finger laid on lip,
Through sunny days and stormy skies,
For my dear Mother's Ship?

Why, she had every dream of mine
Packed somewhere in her hold,
And Certain Hope was the ensign
Bound to her masts of gold.

Oh, proudly up the shimmering tide,
While harbour lights shone o'er her,
I've seen that longed-for vessel glide,
Crumbling the waves before her.

And with what grimy, eager hands,
And thoughts of future trading,
Have I made fast the cable bands
And helped with the unloading.

Ah, youth! Fond theme of many a song,
Beloved of bard and sage,
The thoughts of youth are not so long
As thoughts of middle age!

To-day my spirit would not stir
For shining argosy—
But what if one dear passenger
Should come ashore to me?

FAY INCHFAWN

Author of "*Homely Verses of a Home-Lover.*"



THE CATHEDRAL AND UNIVERSITY, PRAGUE.

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA AS IT IS TO-DAY

IMPRESSIONS OF RECENT VISITS TO THE NEW REPUBLIC

By SIR HARRY BRITTAIN, K.B.E., LL.D., M.P.

Photographs by Vojta, Prague

AMONG the new states which have sprung up out of the War, Czecho-Slovakia is certainly a difficult one for the average untraveller citizen to locate. I have met people of intelligence quite above the average who have fallen into the fairly easy trap of mixing it up with Jugo-Slavia. If only the old name of Bohemia could have been retained—a name far more picturesque and full of historic meaning—it would have been simpler. But Moravia and Slovakia, which joined forces with Bohemia to form the present state, would not agree to this, and for some time to come the uphill process of education must go on until the world knows the exact locality of this important Republic.

How did Czecho-Slovakia become a republic? The question is not easy to answer in a word. For centuries the Czechs

had been under the rule of the Habsburgs. All sentiments of nationality, it might have been thought, have long been lost. This, however, the War effectively disproved.

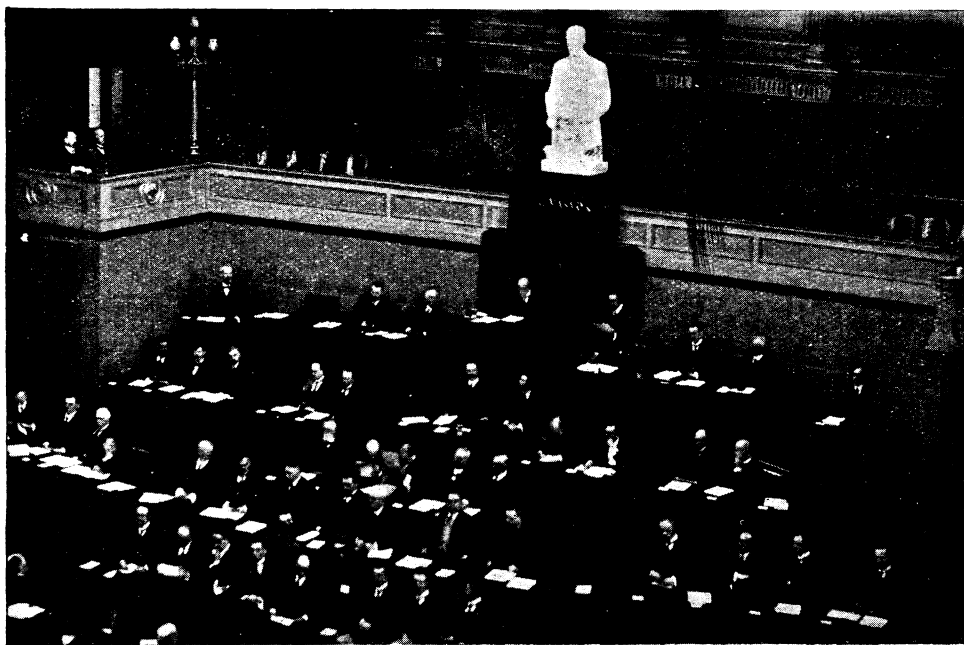
Long before the end of the War it was realised that a collapse of the Austrian Empire was inevitable if the Allies were victorious. For centuries it had been kept together only by reason of the physical force on which it was founded. When it fell, Czechs, Slovaks, Rumanians and Jugo-Slavs saw their opportunity for regaining their long-lost freedom. In the ensuing reconstruction sprang up the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia.

It was in the early nineteenth century that the first reawakenings of Czech national life began to be felt. At first they took the form of literature. By the middle of the century, however, a political movement

against German and Magyar domination was in full swing, and numerous attempts were made to reform the "ramshackle" Empire on a federal basis. Little progress was made, however, and Austria remained in effect, if not in name, a province of Germany.

The outbreak of war in 1914 gave the Czecho-Slovaks the chance of asserting their independence. They refused to fight as Austrian conscripts. When sent with the Austrian Army against their racial brothers, the Russians and Serbs, all their natural and national instincts revolted.

population, for the most part, was starving. Agriculture and the other industries of the country were at a standstill. But Czecho-Slovakia had loyal leaders. They were not dismayed. They had achieved the desire of their hearts. They were not to be beaten by details. President Masaryk, ably seconded in his efforts by Dr. Benes, the present Prime Minister, set to work at once, and it is no exaggeration to say that from the day of its birth Czecho-Slovakia has never looked back. In the four short years since its foundation the destruction of war has in large measure been made good,



INTERIOR OF THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE, PRAGUE.

At every opportunity they surrendered. Their leaders showed the way by refusing to serve even when threatened with imprisonment and death. Then came their reorganisation as part of the Allied forces in Russia. Subsequently they served in Serbia and France. There a very different story was told. On each of the fronts to which it went the Czecho-Slovak Legion played a gallant part. In October, 1918, a fortnight before the Armistice, came the day of liberation. Austria-Hungary no longer existed: nationality triumphed over force.

No easy task faced the new Republic. It had no administrative machinery. The

social and economic reforms have been introduced, and the Republic has become a thoroughgoing democracy, with universal suffrage for the election of its Deputies and proportional representation to safeguard the rights of minorities. Thanks to efficiency and economy in the public services, the prevention of the issue of uncovered currency notes and to increased taxation, the financial position has so far improved that the Government is now able to balance its Budget, an example which might well be commended to those other nations of Europe which are still trying to avert bankruptcy by means of the printing press.

Czecho-Slovakia, it may be said, aims at

assisting in a return of stability to Central Europe, both by its internal management and its foreign policy. Its relations with the Great Powers—Great Britain, France, and Italy—are very cordial, and it is on excellent terms with its near neighbours, with most of whom it has arranged commercial agreements. Some two years ago it formed with Jugo-Slavia, Poland, and Rumania the Alliance known as the "Little Entente," which has been of great benefit to each of the countries concerned. For Czecho-Slovakia is largely an industrial country, while the others rely mainly on agriculture for their prosperity. Together they form an almost self-supporting economic unit.

The Czechs are a virile, go-ahead people, numbering something between ten and twelve millions. For energy, enterprise, and education they might, indeed, be called the Scots of the Slavonic race.

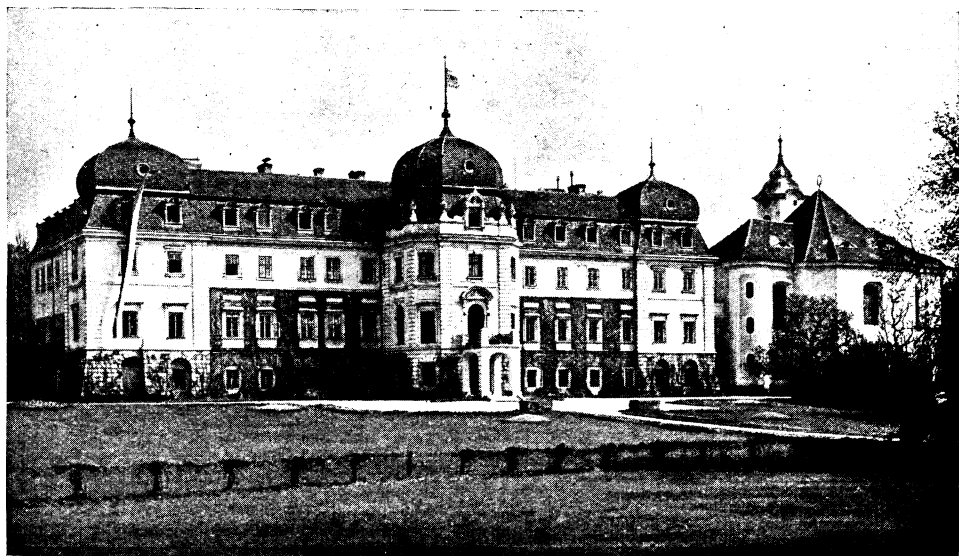
The position of Czecho-Slovakia makes it practically the geographical centre of the backbone of Europe. In shape the new state is somewhat like a banana, slightly compressed at each end. It is for the most part surrounded by ex-enemy countries, and only on the eastern side does it touch an allied Slavonic race in the friendly Poles.

But this is not a political article. Let me, rather, tell of what I have seen in my travels in the Czecho-Slovakian Republic itself. I start with Prague, undoubtedly one of the most picturesque capitals in



PRESIDENT MASARYK.

Europe. It is extremely get-at-able from London. Leaving Victoria at 8.30 in the



THE PRESIDENT'S RESIDENCE, THE CASTLE OF LÁNY.

morning and travelling *via* Calais, one finds awaiting one at the French coast a direct through carriage which links up outside Paris with the Paris-Warsaw express, and runs into Prague at about 9 o'clock the next evening.

To a certain extent Prague, from its formation, reminds one of Athens. It is dominated by the "mighty rock," in this case the Hradchany, which towers over the city in the same way as the Acropolis towers over the capital of Greece. The Hradchany is covered with magnificent buildings, and affords a wonderful view over the old-world city, which stretches out apparently for miles on both sides of the broad River Moldau, on which it stands. Clinging to the hillside are many of the stately palaces of the ancient aristocracy of Bohemia. One of these was at one time the residence of the Kings of Bohemia. Another, the family mansion of the Counts of Thun, now houses the British Legation. The mediæval character of these buildings renders them more imposing to visitors than convenient to their occupiers. As evidence

of this, I may mention the difficulties of the British Minister, who gave me an instance of household cares one night at dinner. In the Thun Palace the dining-room is on the main floor of the building, from the terrace of which one looks down over a regular cliff of wall. The kitchen is on another level, innumerable storeys below. There are no lifts. When he gives a dinner-party, the British Minister has to have no fewer than seven men stationed at different parts of the winding stone staircase to transfer the meal from the chef to the guests!

Many of the owners of these great palaces have readily given short leases of them to foreign legations. Others have gladly accommodated members of the Diplomatic Corps. This has solved for the time being



EXTERIOR OF THE UNIVERSITY, PRAGUE.

a very difficult question, for Prague is suffering severely from the housing shortage. Before the War it was a mere provincial town. Now it has jumped into the proud position of being the capital of a new state, and for many and obvious reasons multitudes of people have flocked in. During the War, as was the case almost everywhere else, no new houses were erected. As the British Legation is in a temporary home, it is not worth the expense of bringing the palace it now occupies up to date. If the Castle of Thun could be purchased, however, it would make a right worthy home for the British representative. Incidentally, it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of having really dignified and suitable headquarters for our diplomatic representatives in all the newer countries of Europe.

No one can remain long in Czecho-Slovakia—particularly if he is in any way recommended to the people or takes with him letters of introduction—without being very strongly impressed with the extraordinary kindness and hospitality which is offered on all sides. The Czechs know how to enjoy life. They do it with almost a touch of that French *joie de vivre* which one finds in almost every corner of the land of our great Ally. During three separate visits, at different times of the year, I found in the Czechs an intense love of sport as well as of the open air. In the summer-time, when the heat in Prague is almost tropical, the whole population of the city—people of every type and every class—seems, clad only in bathing attire, to frequent the banks of the river. They spend hours in the water or on the water's edge. One of the smartest of the clubs is situated on a little island in mid-

stream in the very heart of Prague. Here, in the afternoons, members of both sexes may be seen walking about, not in the frills and furbelows of fashion, but in the far more useful bathing suit and dressing-gown. The latter is put on and off many times during the afternoon between the dips.

Like other Continental peoples, the Czechs are very fond of dancing. On one occasion I was present at the great national ball at Prague, where various dances, which were entirely new to me, as well as the international favourites, were carried out. I was particularly struck by the fact that at this ball there were present at least twice as many men as girls. Those superfluous ones who were not dancing formed a dense black ring in the middle of the great hall. Round them circled the more fortunate of their sex with their partners.

The more exciting outdoor pursuits, however, are Czecho-Slovakia's main attraction to the sports lover. Perhaps the finest shooting left to-day on the Continent of Europe is in Czecho-Slovakia. For years the country was the hunting ground of emperors and kings, and the great estates are for the most part still in existence. Game is as plentiful as it is various, and there are many keen Czech sportsmen of the gun. Like ourselves, they appreciate the fact that the best shooting is not reckoned by the number of the bag, but by the difficulty of its attainment. All keen shots who are fortunate enough to receive an invitation to a shoot in the Republic will be well advised to make a point of accepting.

In winter one of the greatest of the national sports is skiing. This is found at its best in the north of Bohemia, in the



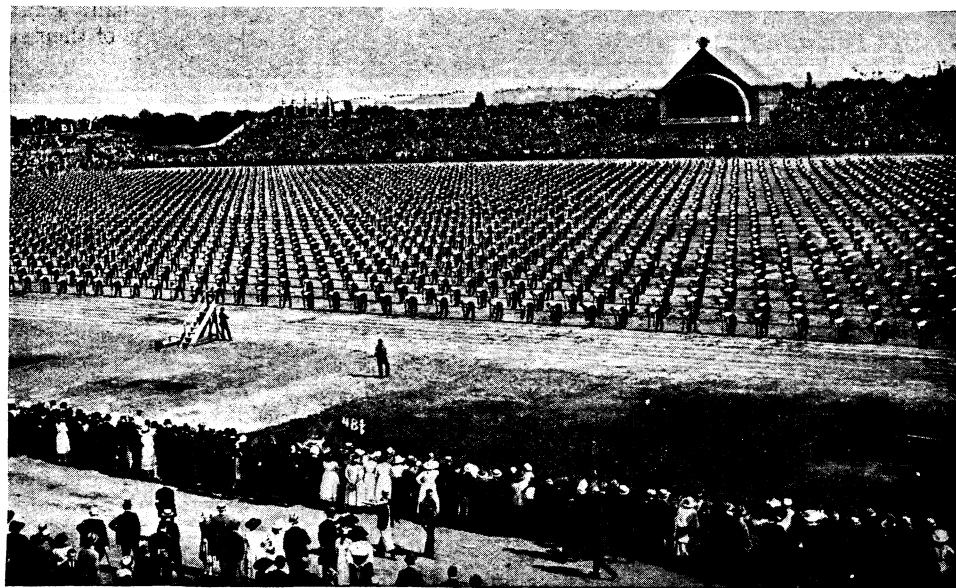
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, PRAGUE, WITH STATUE OF ST. VACLAV IN FOREGROUND.

Riesengebirge—Giant Mountains—and on the Hohe Tatra in the far east. Of the latter I cannot speak from personal experience, but the ski-ing in the Giant Mountains I can vouch for. It is first-rate in every way. Tours through these beautiful mountains are all well mapped out. Throughout the whole of the range there are most attractive buildings known as "Bouda," half farm and half mountain inn, where all that ski-ing man or woman requires for comfort can be found. The hotels are more than comfortable—I never stayed in a more delightful little mountain hotel anywhere in Europe than that which I found at Spindelmühle.

The Czecho-Slovak Republic occupies an

The chief health resorts in the Tatras, which are especially attractive on account of the beautiful scenery, are Tatranská Lomnica, Strbské Pleso and Smokovec (Tatrafured).

The presiding genius and father of his people is its President, M. Masaryk, who now enjoys the satisfaction of seeing the dream of his life come true in the independence of his beloved land. M. Masaryk is a man of most delightful, courtly manner, who is perfectly charming to meet. But he is more. Always he gives one the full impression that behind his courtesy and charm, which at first sight seem to be his chief characteristics, there is a fixed determination and a firm,



A GYMNASIC DISPLAY AT A MILITARY REVIEW.

important place in Europe also on account of its numerous curative and thermal springs, of which there are over 170. In Bohemia alone there are 37 watering-places, at which the number of visitors in 1912 was 154,967, while the 11 health resorts in Moravia attracted 8,934 visitors. In the same year the number of visitors in some of these world-famous watering-places was as follows: Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad), 68,269; Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), 34,509; Františkovy Lázně (Franzensbad), 15,375; Teplice-Sanov 7,776. Pistany, the largest health resort of Slovakia, is unique for its radio-active mud springs. All the above health resorts are well provided with hotels and other arrangements for the comfort of visitors.

strong purpose. He is an outstanding personality in European politics, and his fellow-countrymen have paid him the outstanding compliment of electing him President for life. He is thoroughly enshrined in their hearts. His photograph is seen everywhere, both in public buildings and in the homes of the citizens. To him the Czechs look with every confidence to allay any ripples of unrest which may cross their destinies.

During one of my visits to Prague I witnessed the election of the President, and was present at the opening of the Czech Parliament. The Parliament House, I believe, was at one time a hall of music. In it the usual Continental system of arrangement is followed. The President sits high up in



A WOODLAND LAKE NEAR UZGOROD.

his rostrum; the *bancs* of the Deputies extend fan-like from the centre. To some of us this plan always seems more liable to help in splitting up members into series of parties than does our own arrangement in the House of Commons, where, generally speaking, supporters of the Government sit

on one side and the Opposition on the other. There are at least half a dozen parties in the Czech Parliament, and though their various points of difference were carefully explained to me, I fear that I did not grasp them with sufficient clearness to attempt to distinguish them here.



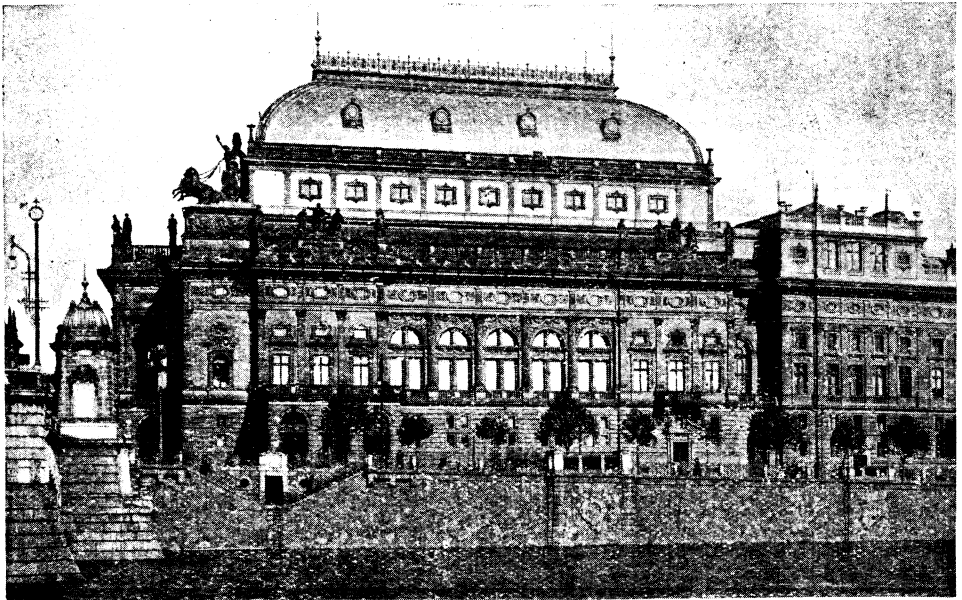
Photo by]

WINTER SPORTS: SKI JUMPING.

[Bratři Deglové, Prague.

After the solemnity and dignity of the Mother of Parliaments, the proceedings in Prague struck me as being a little free and easy. I went one day to listen to what I hoped would be a speech from the Foreign Minister. He had told me the evening before that he meant to speak, if possible, in the morning. The large galleries round the building were all full to overflowing with visitors awaiting the important pronouncement of Dr. Benes, who at that time was, as now, Foreign Minister of the Republic. But, as happens so often in the world of politics, one man proposes and another disposes. A dull debate on a very minor

M. Benes, the Prime Minister, is, I think, one of the ablest men I have ever had the pleasure of meeting, and his sincerity of aim should mean much to his country. Young and energetic, a deep student of European politics, he will, I believe, prove himself the ideal man for working out the destinies of the new Republic. As soon as he was satisfied that the internal affairs of the new Republic were running satisfactorily, M. Benes at once devoted his attention to negotiations with the rulers of other lands, and particularly with those of his neighbours. In this he is well advised, for undoubtedly the greatest difficulty in



THE NATIONAL THEATRE, PRAGUE.

point continued all that morning. The speaker, standing under the President, was a long-winded gentleman, possessed of a voice with no carry at all. Even if I had understood Czech I should not have heard him. Very few apparently wished to try to listen. A little knot of fifteen or so, presumably his supporters, stood round him; the rest occupied their time in strolling about the floor of the House, reading papers and exchanging ideas on current topics. The visitors in the gallery all appeared to be enjoying themselves thoroughly, and the happy buzz suggested nothing more important than a highly successful conversation.

Central Europe to-day is the suspicion and distrust of each of the Succession States for the others. Such important points, for example, as the holding up of rolling stock and irritating frontier delays are matters of which every traveller in Central Europe to-day is given first-hand knowledge.

M. Benes was largely responsible for bringing into effect the working basis of the Little Entente, to which reference has already been made, and which may mean much in future European affairs. With Italy, France, and England he has succeeded in arranging commercial treaties, following this up with successful negotiations in trade arrangements with

Germany, Austria, Hungary, and other countries.

There are few countries more richly endowed in natural resources or equipped for industrial development than Czecho-Slovakia. In pre-War days it produced more than three-quarters of the whole industrial output of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It contains valuable mineral wealth, and throughout the whole country its agricultural industry is highly developed. In this respect not only can the greater part of home requirements be satisfied, but many products, such as sugar, barley, oats, and

cultivated. It was treated in no fewer than 196 factories.

The malt industry is also another very important one, for Czecho-Slovak hops are noted all over the world for their excellent quality. Perhaps no Continental beer is so well known as that of the Pilsener brand. This, though it may be news to many, is made in Czecho-Slovakia. And besides the brewery at Pilsen itself, there are to-day over 660 modern and efficient breweries throughout the country, with an annual producing capacity of over 13,000,000 hectolitres of beer. From this a

Mrs. Crane.

Lady Brittain.



Photo by]

The Hon. Richard Crane
(American Minister).

Sir Harry Brittain.

[Central News.

A SLEIGHING AND SKI-ING PARTY IN THE MOUNTAINS NEAR SPINDELMÜHLE.

hops are available for export. Practically half the total area of the Republic consists of arable land. In this connection the corresponding figure in Great Britain is 23 per cent. Only 4 per cent. of its total area is non-productive as compared with 15 per cent. in Great Britain.

The sugar industry occupies a position by itself. It is not generally known, but it is nevertheless the case, that Czecho-Slovakia is the only European sugar exporter. At the same time it is the second largest beet sugar producer in the world. In 1913 well over 200,000 hectares, giving a total harvest of over 14,500,000 quintals of sugar, were

large annual revenue accrues to the Government.

The forest wealth of Czecho-Slovakia is enormous. No less than 32 per cent. of the whole area, as compared with 4 per cent. in England, is covered with trees. The quality of the timber, I am told, is excellent, and forestry is carried on on the most scientific lines and under the ablest management.

There are many large and well-known iron and steel works in the country. Of these the great Skoda works at Pilsen and the Prague Iron Company at Prague, which employ 35,000 and 15,000 men respectively,

are the most important. Another industry for which the country is justly famed abroad is the manufacture of glass. Almost the whole of the glass turned out is exported—a fact which makes the industry a valuable economic asset to the new Republic. There are at least 150,000 workmen engaged in it, and almost every sort of glass is produced.

Many other industries, such as the making of chemicals, leather-making, and the manufacture of gloves, each of which give occupation to a very large number of workmen, might be mentioned. But sufficient has already been said on the subject to show its importance. I sometimes think we are apt to neglect the markets which such countries as Czecho-Slovakia offer for British trade. Yet the fact undoubtedly is that both the natural resources and the high state of development which this country has now reached make it highly important that commercial men in Great Britain should

give the closest possible attention to Czecho-Slovakia, and leave no stone unturned to develop as far as possible commercial and friendly relations.

From my own experience in the country I have no hesitation in saying that they will find that the citizens of this progressive Republic are ready to meet the Englishman far more than half-way, both in business and politics. They have the greatest admiration for Great Britain's achievements and for all her aims and ideals. They realise that we are helping them to build up a new land out of the ruins of the old, and are intensely appreciative of encouragement and advice. With some knowledge of Central Europe, and particularly of present-day conditions there, I feel I am justified in saying that there is no country I can think of which would better repay a visit by capable, energetic British manufacturers than would the delightful and hospitable Republic of Czecho-Slovakia.



MORNING.

TWO years old upon a gate,
 Safe above the foaming hay.
 Over her a blackbird sat,
 Songful, in his languid way,
 Pouring prophecies of joy.
 Sunny-haired and heedless she
 Held a doll upon her knee
 And a precious broken toy.
 Father looked, and wondered why
 In his heart he heard a cry,
 Sorrow not to be endured;
 Of a sudden, laughter fell
 From her lips and broke the spell.
 Father kissed her, reassured.

RICHARD CHURCH.



"They picked the three of them up in an open boat off the coast of Portugal."

BRUTES

By C. R. COOPER

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT

THE after-hold of the schooner *Kenilcove* was dim and damp and smelling of bilge—a shadowy place of high-piled ship's stores, lighted only by a single swaying ship's lantern, which sent its flickering gleam in rhythmic fashion upon boxes and bales, upon a rude, ill-fitted pallet squeezed between two piles of provisions, upon old ship's fittings and ropes and oakum, and upon a prison and its prisoners. For far at one end, where the shadows were deepest, two sinuous things moved behind the wooden bars of a 'shifting' den, and when the light swayed in that direction, two pairs of eyes sent back flashing reflexes of gleaming green, the eyes of a tiger and her cub.

Brutes they were, within a cage, while without stood a brute who was free. A great-shouldered, long-armed, lanky man was he, with heavy, matted hair which

straggled about his ears and neck in unkempt, unbarbered fashion, with features half hidden by the growth of a frowsy brownish beard, and with deep-set eyes which met the gaze of the feline beasts with something of understanding, something of a nature akin. His gaunt hands clutched the wooden bars of the den, nor did he seem to fear the claws and teeth of the mother-inmate. His voice, hoarse, unnatural, gave forth a jargon-like mixture of words and clucking noises, which the tiger answered in a rumbling purr—the communion of one brute with another.

Above, the small crew of the ancient *Kenilcove* sprawled about the colourless deck, watching the fading roofs and spires of Pensacola, as the old schooner, jibs and topsails full, swung out into the deeper stretches of water and struck her rolling, pitching stride of the long journey towards

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Bordeaux. Their work of loading the cypress and pine which formed her cargo was over, their outlook of the deeper seas one of lethargic days of balmy winds, or of rushing hours in squall and storm before they should see the coast of a mainland again; yet content withal, for the wooden ship which carries its lumber by the devious, slow method of sails means far more loafing during a voyage than work, while the southern route to Europe often brings greater amount of sunshine than storm. So, there above, all was peace and ease, and anticipation directed toward the crooked streets, the *rhums chauds* and music of Bordeaux. Below—

A quick, almost animal-like movement, and the shaggy man turned at the sound of a step on the ladder leading from the ship's cabin. His eyes glinted peculiarly, seeming to sink even deeper in their sockets. The long arms swung restlessly.

"Well," came in a snarl, "what do you want?"

The intruder halted on the ladder, then, bending, peered with blinking eyes into the hold.

"Who's there?"

"Is it any of your business?"

"Plenty. I'm the mate."

"Then go to hell!" The shaggy being said it gruffly and turned to his pets. The mate cleared the ladder with a leap and hurried forward.

"Look here——"

But he said no more. The gaunt yet muscular hands, their blue veins standing suddenly forth, had clutched him by the shoulders and thrown him back. The mouth, half hidden behind the straggly beard, was working viciously, and the eyes had in them something of the green gleam of the tiger, as, raging, the human occupant of the hold towered over the ship's officer for a moment, threatening, waiting, swaying with pent-up power for the next assault. Then suddenly, almost weakly, he drew back and brushed a hand over his eyes.

"You're new on this ship?"

"Yes." The mate said it more in surprise than in answer to the question. "I——"

"Then get out of here, and stay out! You're not supposed to come down here. This is mine—understand? The skipper's said so. Get out! Hear me? Get out!" Rage was creeping into the voice again. "I don't want you here—I don't want anybody here! Get out!"

Mutely the mate obeyed, while peering

eyes followed him up the ladder. A moment later the shaggy head turned upward. Voices were coming faintly from the cabin, into which the mate had climbed:

"Who's that down in the hold?"

"Jim Barton. Let him alone."

"I will." A laugh accompanied the words. "Didn't know he was down there, and I was in trouble before I knew it. Acts crazy."

"Yes—in a way. Let him alone."

"But what about it when I have to go into the hold?"

"Get Pete, the cook, to take you in. Pete worked for him when he had a ship of his own. He takes him his food and the meat for that tiger of his."

Below, the shaggy man turned toward the wooden den of the striped beast.

"Meat," he said blankly. "They're talking about you up there." Then he cocked his head once more. The voice, evidently that of the captain, had resumed, in answer to a question.

"He's my brother-in-law. Married my sister, but he doesn't know it now. Got a girl, nearly grown, but hasn't recognised her since she was a baby. We spend most of our time ashore trying to make him remember. No use. Looks on me as a sort of a detached thing, and pays no attention to the girl. The only thing he seems to have anything in common with is that tiger."

Again, below, there came a mumbling word:

"Tiger!"

But that was all. The shaggy, gaunt man had heard only so many words—no more. They meant nothing to him, brought him no memories, awakened in him no interest, bore for him no pictures or visions of the past. He merely listened, as some beast would listen, as they went on above:

"Pitiful, isn't it?"

"Worse. It's tragic—especially to a fellow who knew him in other days. Jim and I had sister-ships. His was the *Martinique*, and we plied the lumber trade together. Both of us felt we were a little different from the usual run of skippers; we'd had a bit of education, and we were both working for the time when we could cut loose and live ashore. As I say, he married my sister, and they were very happy; he was a mild-mannered sort of fellow, good to his wife and proud of her."

"He—mild?"

"Gentle as a girl! Worried about his

wife every minute he was afloat. The result was that after the baby was born, he told her he couldn't stand to be away from them both for four or five months at a stretch, and fixed up the cabin of the *Martinique* so that he could take her along. For a couple of voyages everything went fine. Then one time, on the return voyage from Bordeaux in ballast, they hit a storm. That was the end."

"You mean?"

"They picked the three of them up in an open boat off the coast of Portugal; how they'd ever got that far out of their course, no one knows. My sister was dead. There was blood in the bottom of the boat, and three cartridges missing from Jim's revolver. He'd probably had to kill the oarsmen, fighting over the water."

"Oh, I thought you were going to say——"

"He'd killed her? Oh, no. She was dead from exposure and thirst. The water was gone. When they found them she was in one end of the boat and he was in the other, with Alice—that's his girl—in his arms. His eyes were set on his wife, but he was unconscious. Evidently they'd both sacrificed for the baby; it was in pretty good shape."

"Gave it the water that they should have had themselves."

"Probably. Anyway, the *City of London* picked them up and took them on board. Had a doctor there, and he worked over Jim for hours before he got any result. Then all of a sudden, just before Barton got fully conscious, he began to sing—it must have been uncanny—nursery rhymes and old cradle songs, like he must have sung to that youngster, out there in the middle of the ocean, with his heart breaking and his wife dead and stark in the other end of the boat."

In the after-hold, standing before the tiger den, the bearded man with the deep-set eyes licked his lips and looked about him in a troubled, half-frightened manner. Something was stirring within him; there was an ache at his heart which had come and gone for years, non-understandable, non-definable. Why were they always talking like this? Why did they always ask him questions? Above:

"But when he really awoke he was another man. Surly and ugly and hateful. They tried to find out what had happened, but he couldn't tell. They showed him his baby, but he didn't recognise her. In his

pockets were a few old letters, and they identified him in that way, and brought him home to me. That is all. He's never been any different, never remembered, never known his daughter, although she's been beside him now for nearly eighteen years, with the exception, of course, of these trips of his."

"With this tiger?"

"Yes. He wanders away—we seldom know where he's gone. A show went broke down south a couple of years ago, and he bought a tiger and her mate. They seemed to be just what he'd been looking for; I guess it was the brute in them that attracted him. The female, Beauty, cottoned to him right away—he's made a regular pet of her—but the male always hated him. On the last trip we heard a noise down in the hold one night, and found the male tiger dead. He'd killed it."

"How?"

"I don't know. It had escaped from its cage, and he'd killed it; that was all the explanation he'd give. Crushed its head with an iron bar while it tore at his throat. On the last trip back the cub was born to Beauty."

In the dim light of the swaying ship's lantern the human brute in the hold below opened and clenched his gaunt yet strong hands, and stared at the wooden walls, where yet a bloodstain or two remained from the encounter.

"They're talking about me!" came with sudden interest. "They——"

Then he listened more attentively than ever. The mate had asked a question:

"But why the tiger at all? What does he do with it? Where does he go? Where——"

"He must give shows with it—in fact, I know he does. Sometimes he merely makes the trip across and back; then again he leaves the ship with his beast and disappears. On the next voyage Pete goes out and hunts him up. He travels about the little fairs in France, or at the market-places, exhibiting the tiger and charging a few sous for a look at it. Pete seems to have some sort of second sense about him; he can always locate him."

The mate laughed nervously.

"I guess I'll be sure to have Pete around whenever I go below," he announced. Then a door closed, and the conversation was over. In the hold the shaggy Jim Barton went again to the cage, and, apparently forgetful of what had gone on

above, opened the door, to release the giant beast and her cub. Then for a long time he played about the hold with the young feline, dangling a piece of rope before it while it scratched and scrambled like some overgrown house-cat, and while the mother looked on from her crouched position in one corner, purring and content. It was the daily routine of the three prisoners of the bilgy, dim, shadowy prison, a communion of the brute instinct, as plainly defined in the human as in the beasts. At last a scraping sound of steps, and the man, with furtive haste, shunted the animals within their den. Pete appeared on the ladderway.

"Comin' down!" he signalled.

"Come on!" The voice was gruff, toneless. Pete descended, the mate following.

"It's Mr. Leminway," announced the cook. "He's the mate here. He's a good friend. He has to come down here every once in a while, and I want you to be good to him."

"Yes," Barton agreed. But two days later, as the mate descended the ladder, it was to find a raging, glaring-eyed beast awaiting him, hands clutched, the cords of his neck bulging, his mouth contorted under the frowzy beard.

"Don't sing that!" came the shouted command, a shout with a hint of hysteria in it.

The mate stared. "Why, it's only a little song I sing at home. I've got a baby, you know, and——"

"I don't care! I don't like it! Don't sing it—I hate it!"

"Why?"

"I—I don't know," was the childish answer, and the man, apparently forgetful of the mate, turned hazily back to the den of the tiger. After that, the officer went silently into the hold when duty called him there, accomplished his purposes and left again as silently. The strange vagaries of the deep-eyed, bearded Jim Barton were not to be trifled with; the bestial instinct was ever too near the surface, the bloodstains of a dead tiger which had sought to kill a human brute still showed blackly on the walls.

A week passed, and two after that, as the plodding old wind-jammer, sails bellied, wore steadily on into the deeper seas and toward the ocean mile-post of the Azores. The journey had been smooth, the rocking of the old ship's lantern in the dingy hold had barely varied. And night and day for

the occupants of the ill-smelling prison life had been the same—hours of stolid indifference to everything, in which the tiger slept with her cub between her great outstretched forepaws, and in which the man sat upon a pile of rope, his gaunt hands hanging loosely beside him, his mouth half open, his eyes staring vacuously at nothing; and hours in which there was more life, when the den door would open, to permit the mother and her child to come forth, that the man might dangle the bit of rope before the scrambling little ball of fur—hours in which a slight hint of humanity seemed to invade the dank place, in which the mother became less of a feline than in her caged periods, and in which the man sometimes smiled, and sometimes held the baby beast with something of tenderness, as he pressed his bearded face against the soft fur of its breast. Once in a while, as he stood thus, the great tears would gather in his eyes, at last to brim over and to roll, one following the other, into the matted bushiness of his tousled beard. Nor did he brush them away, nor know why they came. He simply cried as he held the cub—that was all.

Above, the watch took his place in the crow's nest, and the man at the wheel held the helm straight to the course, for sooner or later there would come the sight of land, a joyful interlude in the midst of a rolling world of water. Again the chanties sounded as the crew gathered to pull at the ropes, or to raise sail where it had been lowered away, the old chanties long forgotten except upon the sailing ships, where still they linger as a part of the romance of the sea. Night came, and an accordion squeaked atop the forecastle, while lips framed old songs, which echoed across the waist of the ship to the cabin, there to be re-echoed by the mate, happy in the knowledge of the proximity of land, and the chance to mail a letter home as the ancient old craft put in at the Azores for fresh supplies before continuing its journey to the mainland. And so he sang, lustily, heartily, while below——

The form of shaggy, ill-kempt Jim Barton rose from the coil of rope where he had been sitting for hours. The lean hands stretched and clutched. The cords stood forth on his neck; the eyes rolled angrily in their deep sockets.

"Stop that song!" he muttered dazedly. "Stop that song!"

But still it continued above, the roaring,

happy lilt of a man about to send a letter home :

"Hush-a-bye, baby, on the tree-top!
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock . . . "

But there was no happiness in the face of the man below. Racking torment was in his eyes as he paced the narrow space which formed his little world ; strange throbbing pounded through his heart. And he did not know the reason. All he could tell, all he could understand, was that the mate above was singing, and that he hated it ; that it hurt him, for no apparent reason, that his every nerve rebelled against it. But still it came :

"When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,
Down will come baby and cradle and all !"

"Stop that !" There was a moan in the voice now. "Stop it, I tell you ! I don't like it—I don't like it !"

But again it came, more lustily than ever :

"Hush-a-bye, baby, on the tree-top . . . "

Blindly, dizzily, the man fretted about the hold. Strange echoes were in his ears, echoes he could neither classify nor describe. At the tiger's cage he stopped and raged ; then, on a sudden impulse, opened the door and brought forth the cub, to hold it close to him for an instant, then thrust it within again. From far away a shout had come, and the lustiness of the song above had dimmed into silence. But Jim Barton did not know. Still he heard it, still the words followed him, even as the shadows of the flickering lantern followed him, as he strode about, jabbering meaningless words, clawing at a bit of rope, only to throw it from him, then suddenly, desperately, to leap for the ladder. But as he thrust open the door and strode into the cabin, no frightened mate faced him, no booming song burst upon him. The place was empty, while without bawling orders were being given, and men scampering about the deck in obedience to them. Jim Barton paid no heed. A moment he stood staring vacuously ; then, like a haunted man, he turned hastily for the ladder and descended into the hold, there to huddle upon his coil of rope, a limp, wondering, broken thing.

Only to start. The lamp had taken on a new swing ; a tremor had gone through the old craft ; its course was changing rapidly, desperately, it seemed. Then a crash, as the lantern seemed to twist upon its hangings, as ship stores shifted and a box slid from its position at the top of the pile and clattered

upon the deck. Barton straightened. His eyes set. His legs spread, the better to hold to the careening lurch of the vessel. Then came his voice, bawling, sonorous, and with a new strength :

"Put down that helm there, and hold her ! Hold her in the teeth of it ! Into the wind there, into the wind !"

But only the tiger and her cub, shifting uneasily about their wooden prison, could hear. Only the clicking of the ship's lantern, as it swung and spluttered, answered his half-crazed commands. Again a crashing sweep as the craft went high with the waves, then settled on her beam ends. Sprawling and scrambling, the man strove to hold his feet, while boxes toppled about him, and the coil of rope, up-ended, rolled here and there in wobbling circles. Strange, screeching sounds echoed from far away, the voice of the wind in the rigging. And still the man-brute bawled his orders, a dazed, maddened thing, standing there in the shadows of a bilgy hold, shouting, even screaming to an imaginary crew :

"Bring her up to the wind, I tell you ! There, at the sheets, take in, take in ! What's the matter with you, anyway ? Can't you take in when I tell you ? Stand by the halyards, fore, main and mizzen ! Brewster—where's Brewster ? Brewster, what's the matter with that flying jib and stays'l ? Look to those tops'ls ! Harris, aloft and tie up those tops'ls ! Hear me, aloft there ! We've got to head her into the wind and luff through !"

A sweeping boom came from above, and the eerie cries of men, weakened by the contrast of shrilling wind and of battering, thunderous sounds as a tremendous pounding echoed upon the deck. In her cage the tiger, crouched and hissing, drew her yowling cub closer between her forepaws, instinctively protecting it against an unseen, unknown danger. The lantern swung in wider circles than ever, but still the human brute continued to shout, directing the visionary crew of a visionary ship, just as, without, the real captain was directing his real crew against the ravages of the sudden, tempestuous squall. By some sort of second nature Barton seemed to have sensed what had happened—the eagerness of the captain to remain upon his course as long as possible in spite of the approaching squall ; then the long, ninety-degree turn to bring the ship against the wind that it might luff through—a turn that had come too late. Within the damp hold the fight was being re-echoed

by a man who shouted in a voice racked with desperation, a man whose eyes were wild, whose figure was strained, whose arms pounded at his sides as he lashed about in the brief space which the tumbling boxes

"We can't make it! We'll have to run for it, but we're gone! She'll broach-to in the first trough! Get to the pumps! But, men"—and there was a new steadiness in the voice—"don't lose your heads! A ship



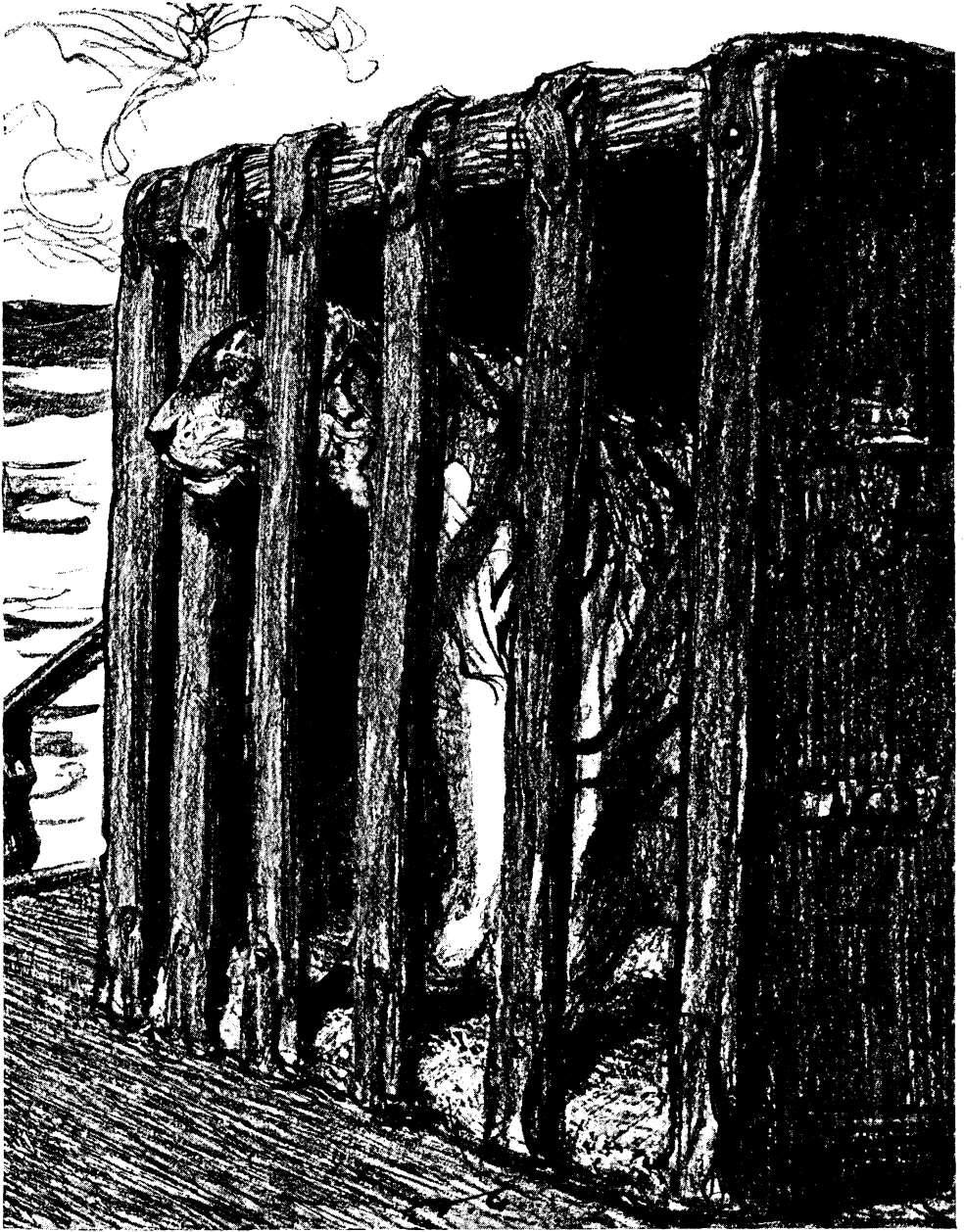
"Once more the croaking song came, as a tiger cub cuddled to sleep in his embrace."

and crates had left him, and who screamed at last—

never sank with a cargo of lumber! Hold steady, there, hold steady!"

Hours passed. Water made its appearance on the deck of the hold, foaming, creeping salt water. Imagination had

characterised it a few moments before. From above came the sucking creak of pumps, then a fresh outburst of shouts. Within the hold the deep-eyed Barton



"From her cage a mother-tiger watched . . . a man who was safe from claws and rending teeth, because he held her cub."

become the truth. Seemingly the wind had lessened; the boat rolled soggily, but with less of the sickening plunge which had

stopped for a moment to stare about him. Already a few of the lighter crates had begun to float, and the water had risen to his

knees. Then, with a new frenzy, he thrashed about, shouting his commands, cursing and screaming, turning toward the tiger's den and raging impotently at it, while the creeping flood rose higher, crept toward his hips, then passed them. Suddenly a cry from above, then steps on the ladder.

"Below there!"

"Aye! Below!" The frenzied Barton accepted it only as a cry in answer to his own shouts. "Below there! What's the damage? Speak up! How fast is she filling, and can we make it? What chance is there——"

He stopped, staring blankly into the face of Pete Carson, the cook, bending on the ladder and peering at him, a bedraggled figure in the foamy, dirty flood.

"Barton, what's the matter with you? Why don't you come above?"

The man stopped weakly, then stared about him in the amazement of one just coming to his senses. He furrowed a hand in the water and watched it drip from his fingers. He blinked at the floating boxes and crates and barrels, then turned to the man above.

"I—I don't know," came at last. "What's happened?"

"We're in trouble. A squall hit us, and we couldn't get into the wind quick enough. It laid the ship on her beam ends and sprung her seams. Then we tried to run for it, and broached-to. The water's coming in like a millrace. They're manning the boats to shove off! Come on! The captain sent me for you."

But Barton sank back.

"How—how about Beauty?"

"Come on! You've got to think about yourself now. There's no chance for that cat—there's no place. Besides, the men would be afraid."

But Barton still moved away toward the den of the tiger and her cub. The water was waist-deep now. Slowly one gaunt hand raised toward the hasp of the door. Then a scream came from above, and a scurrying form hurried up the ladder. The cage had been opened. The tiger was coming forth!

The rolling had nearly ceased, bringing more clearly the swish of the waves and the churning of the water as it rushed through the holds and compartments. The flood was nearly to Barton's armpits now, but he did not seem to notice it. His attention was upon the tiger, hissing and spitting as it fought at the water, now just above the floor of the cage, started forth,

then drew back, halting and turning in the beginning of a frenzy of fear. At last came the voice of the man, strangely steady—

"Easy, Beauty! Steady there, girl! You've got to swim for it. I'll take the cub. Easy now, easy!"

But the great cat, with instinctive knowledge of the danger to her young, had grasped the cub gently in her teeth. Then a plunge, a moment more, and side by side the man and the tiger were struggling toward the ladder, the yowling, hissing cub barely held above water by the arched head of the beast. A scramble, as great claws tore at the old, wooden ladder; a plunge which sent the hissing, frightened feline back into the water; another attempt, and still another after that. And the man was beside her, his strong hands clenched in the loose hide along her ribs, pulling and hauling at her, shouting and encouraging her, nor desisting when the great sweeps of her sabre-like claws cut deep into his flesh. A third sally, then a fourth. They made the cabin, and, the man in the lead, hurried forth.

The waist of the ship was already in water as the waves rolled over it, the fore-castle deck barely above it. The after-deck was higher, and there in the dimness of the black night was gathered the crew, making ready two of the three boats for a passage in the open sea toward the far-away land of the Azores. A hazy figure came forward.

"That you, Barton?"

"Yes."

"Come on! We're waiting for you. We're ready to shove off."

But a cry intervened.

"Look out there, captain! Stand back! He's got that tiger with him!"

"Barton!"

"I don't go without her." The man said it dully, coldly, an accepted fact which needed no explanation. A boat splashed in the water. Oars began to creak. The dim figure of the captain hesitated.

"You can't take that tiger, Barton. Don't you understand? It's impossible."

"I don't go without her," came the toneless answer. "She's alive, just the same as I am. I'll stay with her."

"But, man——"

"Captain"—the voices from the second boat were chorusing now in frightened admonition—"he's crazy! You can't do anything with him! You can't——"

"Barton"—the captain still lingered—

"won't you use some sense in this thing? The ship's waterlogged and the masts are gone. There isn't a foot of sail left. We can take you in the boat, but not that——"

"I'll stay here, then. And if you try to take me, you've got to pass Beauty first!"

"But——" Then the captain ceased his entreaties as a new chorus of protestations came from the waiting boat. "Maybe you're right, Jim. There's a breaker of water and a boat box in that other boat. If you want to, you can try it by yourself. But if I were you, I'd come with us. We're practically sure to make land. Won't you come?"

"She's alive, too, and her cub." The same tonelessness, the same dogged spirit was uppermost. "She's got a right to live, as much as I have."

It was useless. A wait, another entreaty. Then :

"Maybe it's for the best, Jim."

"Maybe so." But the tall, bearded man did not know why he said it. A moment more and the oars of the second boat began to slap the water. At the waist of the ship the ocean rolled ceaselessly over decks that would never show again. Slowly, soggily, the derelict dipped her nose into the lashing waves, hiding from view all the craft save the mast-stumps and the after-deck, where stood three figures, a tiger, her cub, and a man—a man who stared blankly out to sea, where the vague forms of two ship's boats were losing themselves in the blackness of night. Sunrise found him still standing where he had stood when the boats pulled away, his hands clenched, his eyes looking out with wondering, almost childish interest upon the blankness of the world about him, a hopeless, helpless figure, alone in a world of mockery.

For the sun glinted now upon light, dancing waves which seemed to caress the old hulk instead of dash against it, waves which tinkled and sang with strange melodies which swept in rhythmic motion all about the drifting derelict, and covered the sodden inundated waist and forecastle with a soft shroud of greenish-blue that the wreckage of the night might be forgotten and the scars of the storm be hidden. Huddled near-by lay the tiger, asleep, her cub curled against her breast. The man moved uneasily. Again the tears brimmed from his eyes and lost themselves in his beard. But he did not brush them away. He did not know why they were there.

Something grated at the gangway, and Barton turned, to see a protruding end of

the wooden cage, which in some manner had floated up from the hold and through the cabin. He hurried to the edge of the deck and, leaning there, caught the den by one end to hold it until he could secure it with a near-by length of rigging rope. At last, deliberately, he edged it forth from the place where it had lodged and dragged it to safety on the deck. Then he turned.

"Beauty!" he called, and the tiger rose. "Home!"

The tiger sniffed at the cage and strode about it, while the cub yawned and stretched in the background. Barton moved toward the remaining boat, there to stand long in contemplation. But at last he shook his head.

"We're safer here," came at last. Then, as though to free himself from temptation, he crawled within and, one by one, cast the oars away, watching each as the lap of the waves carried it farther and farther into the distances of the sea. A long time afterwards he lugged forth the breaker of water and the boat box, to open the latter and to paw among its contents: the fishing-lines, the few cans of meat and tins of hard-tack, the sewing materials and knives and matches and candles and flint and steel, sorting them into little piles and counting them—the jealous possessions of a man who might never possess more. At last, half angrily, he cut the cords from the fishing-hooks and threw the prongs into the sea. There might be fish to be caught, but there was nothing to form the lure. Then he rose and, carrying the breaker of water to the tiger's den, unfastened the drinking pan which had lodged between the bars, wiped it dry of salt water with a sleeve, and, pouring it full, set it before the tiger. This done, he upturned the barrel to drink deep, to sink to the deck, and stare at nothing.

And so a week began, of flashing sunlight, of porpoises which played in the distance, their graceful, sleek bodies cutting in smooth circles above the water, their swift, darting course gleaming in the sun; of nights that were fair and calm, when the phosphorescence of the waves sparkled and glowed in the faint light of a knife-edged moon, a week in which the man, cursing himself for the weakness that was his, dipped again and again into the box of stores until sustenance was gone, in which he fought himself away from the breaker of decreasing water, in which he paced the deck of the sloshing old wreck, muttering to himself—a week in which the tiger waited more and more

fretfully for the food that did not come. The cub was nursing at her breast; but for the mother there were no longer the lean strips of horse-meat, the great, heavy-knuckled bones to lick and crunch, only a man who talked to her, who watched her with constantly vigilant eyes, and who at last, when she slept within her cage, crawled stealthily close and clamped tight the hasp upon the door, although he knew that one lunge could break it open, one crashing blow of an angry paw splinter the wooden bars which surrounded her. But the cub still played in freedom.

Two days, two nights. At last the tiger licked at her water-pan in vain, and the cub yelped fitfully as it clambered between the bars to push and tug at breasts which gave but grudgingly. And the man was sitting, staring-eyed, his hands clutched across his knees, his mouth drooping, his hair tousled over his forehead. Twenty-four hours more. He fingered the knives, felt their keen edge, and looked toward the tiger. Then, with a sudden frenzy, he leaped to his feet, threw the knives overboard, and stood trembling as the circles widened in the water.

"She's alive, too!" came from thick lips. "She's got a right to live—she's got a right to live!"

For a long moment he reeled about the deck, and, seizing the breaker, upended it in a vain, desperate hope. But the last drop was gone long ago. More, the tiger had looked upon a full water-pan a full day after the human brute had ceased to swallow. She had a baby. He was only a human derelict. Thin, nervous hands sought the boat-box, but those same hands had searched before. And so he sank to the deck again, and, sprawling there, watched the porpoises as they flashed at play, they who lived while he was dying!

Night! Morning! The sunlight played upon him with its warmth, calling back to life the form in which the night winds had chilled the slow-moving blood. Jim Barton stirred. His head rolled on the wide shoulders. The fingers twisted. Glazed eyes opened and closed again. Within her cage, hissing and clawing at the water-pan, the tiger twisted and turned, her heavy shoulders weaving, the tail lashing slowly.

Starvation she had met in comparative peace. It was instinct. But thirst—

Again the man stirred; then, as though mechanically, the black lips moved, and croaking words came from his throat—

words which freed themselves rather than were forced, words that were strange and weird and out of place there upon the sun-swept deck of that old derelict, where a tiger paced in a cage she could break with one dash for freedom, where a cub yowled and spat and clawed at his mother's breast as she turned from him, and where a man sang in mechanical, unknowing fashion:

"Hush-a-bye, baby, on the tree-top!

When the wind blows, the cradle will rock . . ."

The voice broke. The glazed eyes opened and stared. The head turned with the fierceness of dementia.

"Who's singing?" the croaking voice demanded. "Who's singing? Stop it! I hate that song! Hear me? I hate it!"

But no one answered; only the laughing lap of the waves, the splashing of the porpoises, the soft murmur of the light, dancing wind. He sank back again, only to galvanise with attention. For the eyes of the tiger had centred!

"She's got me!" He said it without fear, without emotion. "She can't stand it any more—she's got me!"

The beast had begun to pad nervously, raising first one forefoot, then the other. The cub yowled and spat as usual, and clawed at her breasts. She turned hastily to lick it and grumble over it in animal-mother fashion; then, more stealthily than ever, she resumed her weaving position at the den-gate, her eyes fiercer, her nervous fretfulness increased. The man turned his head slowly toward the stump of the main mast.

"It's higher than she could leap," he mused mechanically, and started to force himself to his feet, only to halt half raised. The cub had left the cage now, and with wobbling steps was coming in his direction. The thick tongue licked at black lips. The eyes became more animal-like than ever. The trembling hands outstretched and waited.

"She'd get me!" It was as though he were appeasing a conscience. "She'd get me! I've got a right—"

The cub tumbled closer, whining weakly. The clawing hands waited, then clutched at a furry neck. They raised the tiny beast, while the black lips went grim, while the breath pulled hard into distended nostrils.

"She'd get me! I've got a right to live! I've—"

The grip tightened about the tiny throat, cutting off the gurgling cry of pain. The little legs twisted and clawed; the form

writhed until it almost seemed to rest upon his arms. The glaring, deep-set eyes of the human brute flashed with something akin to revulsion, then suddenly widened. For the excuse was gone! He had seen the eyes of the tiger, and the gleam within them had faded. They were luminous now as they watched him with trust, with the faith of long days and weeks in which he had cared for her and for her young, the faith that one sees in the eyes of a dog when you raise her puppy, the faith and light that is in the eyes of a human mother when you fondle her baby. And the tiger was only a mother, a starving, thirsting mother, watching her baby raised in the arms of a man who had fed her and petted her, a man who had fondled her cub many times before and never brought it harm; watching even as a dying woman once had watched, as she saw the thing she loved travel into stronger arms when her own no longer bore warmth or strength to comfort it. Instinctively the grip of the fingers loosened. The jaw dropped. A drolling half-cry came from the man's discoloured lips. Then, with a sudden, spasmodic effort, he grasped the cub tight and rocked there sobbing.

Strange words clicked over his dry lips—admonitions, directions. He cursed in racking, desperate fashion. He struggled to his feet, then sank again, dazedly, fearfully; his features contorted, his arms still remained tight-clutched about the cub. Then he settled again in bare consciousness, and once more the croaking song came, as a tiger cub cuddled to sleep in his embrace, a song in which the gentleness was apparent even in spite of the harshness of the dry throat and mouth, the song which once he had railed at, but which now came unbidden, to be repeated and re-repeated, while from her cage a mother-tiger watched—watched a man who was all but dead, but a man who was safe from claws and rending teeth because he held her cub.

A half-hour and he was silent, to stir uneasily, to look about him, to raise the cub as though to thrust it from him, only to sink back again, jealous of even that effort. But the eyes remained open, eyes that seemed to be looking at things which flitted in vacancy, eyes which suffered, eyes which no longer carried the animal glare, but which some way, somehow, seemed

metamorphosed into the eyes of a gentle man, eyes which had in them love, and kindness, and tears which streamed in slow procession into the fastnesses of a matted beard.

Away off to the right a smudge of smoke appeared and came closer. The man did not see. His eyes were on the sun-swept deck and the pictures which no one but he could see. An hour, and he stirred weakly at a shout from the sea. Then, the tiger cub scrambling from his grasp, he staggered to his feet.

"Water!" he called croakingly. "Water first, before you come aboard! I've got a tiger here that I've—I've got to save! But she's got to have water before you can get near her. You've—you've got water, haven't you?"

They passed him the keg. Then squeamish sailors grudgingly shoved the cage and its scrambling occupant into the gig. A staggering man slumped to a seat, still staring, the tears still coming from sad, suffering eyes, the thin hands kneading, the lips, in quavering fashion, forming the words of an old, old song:

"Hush-a-bye, baby, on the tree-top!
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock . . ."

A ship's side. A block and tackle which raised a cage containing a tiger and her cub and lowered them into a hold. A weak, staggering man who shuffled along the deck, leaning upon the shoulders of two sailors. But suddenly, with dragging, staggering steps, he broke away and sagged forward.

A young woman was passing along deck, a child in her arms. Suddenly she stopped, bewildered, as a black-lipped, weaving being faced her. Half frightened, she saw a gaunt hand go forth and touch, ever so tenderly, the cheek of the child. Then the strength that had been his vanished. The knees sagged, the strange bearded figure crumpled to the deck, to lie there motionless, lifeless, except for a slight twitching of the gaunt fingers, except for the sobbing, weak voice which told of hope and joy and dreams in spite of suffering, and the words of a heart which spoke after years of dumbness:

"I want to go home—I want to go home—to my baby!"

THE CIRCUS

By C. KENNETT BURROW

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

HALF a dozen men, farm-hands for the most part, were taking their "noonings" on the long bench outside "The Dog and Gun." It was mid-August, and the air above the dusty road vibrated with heat. Even the elm-shaded space on which the bench stood was, as one of the men remarked, "most like a baker's oven." This observation was so unnecessary that no one took any notice of it, and the speaker, a shy individual, gazed fixedly at his mug of ale and tried to look as though he had said nothing.

Presently the local bill-poster, carrying a bundle of placards and a can of paste, came limping down the road. He paused before "The Dog and Gun," and the languid "nooners" suddenly showed signs of interest. To village communities a bill-poster, if not a person of importance, is at least an object of curiosity.

"Come 'long, Joey," said one of "The Dog and Gun's" customers, "come 'long an' wet your old throat." Joey approached the bench, set down his placards and pail, and took a seat next the speaker.

"'Tis tarr'ble warm, for sure," he said, "an' a drop wouldn't hurt me." He drank from the other's mug, and then the neighbour on the other side proffered his. Joey applied himself to this also, and then said, with a cheerful grin—

"'Twon't do, mates, to take too much, or they posters might get stuck wrong side up. Once 'pon a time——"

"We know that tale, Joey. What have 'ee got in that bundle?"

"I never knew such an inquirin' man as you be, Thomas," Joey said. "You're most as bad as a woman."

Thomas smiled pensively, the others laughed.

The bill-poster rose and turned to face the inn. On the left of that homely hostelry was a barn, the end of which was plastered over with announcements of local sales and the advertisements of Hurstborne tradesmen, Hurstborne being the nearest town.

Joey surveyed this space with a professional eye.

"I reckon," he said, "that it'll about go there."

"Then you've got somethin' uncommon big," Thomas said.

"You've spoke the truth this time."

"Well, what is it?"

"'Tis a won'erful piece o' work," said the bill-poster. He untied the string round his bundle and revealed to the eager watchers a piece of work that was wonderful indeed. It was in three sections—for the convenience of the paste operator—and when these were arranged in their right order an amazing picture was presented to the eyes of the Sherbury worthies. It represented a circus ring in which Beauty, standing tiptoe on a fiery steed, was on the point of launching itself through a paper hoop, and Strength was doing marvellous things with three horses abreast. There was also an elephant, sitting on a tub and playing a barrel-organ with its trunk, half a dozen clowns, and a majestic ring-master in evening dress. The whole was printed in colours that assaulted the eye. At the top, in immense letters, were the words "Mardyke's Super-Circus."

"Gosh!" said Thomas. "But what's all this to do wi' us, Joey?" The bill-poster produced a separate slip which announced that this unprecedented show would visit Hurstborne for two nights only in the following week.

"This 'ere," said Joey, "goes at the bottom. They has 'em printed special for every place."

For the affixing of the poster to the end of the barn a step-ladder had to be borrowed from the landlord, and that gentleman himself came out, in his shirt-sleeves, to watch the proceedings. Joey had a considerable audience before he had finished the job to his satisfaction, for everyone who passed "The Dog and Gun" stopped to stare, and naturally others came to see what they were staring at.

As the little crowd was dispersing, a

young man rode up and drew rein before the inn. He was young, handsome, and, though evidently of the soil, he had an air and aspect that were almost dandyish. His brown leggings, highly polished, fitted to perfection, and though a Norfolk jacket did not harmonise exactly with new riding-breeches, the effect was pleasing enough.

At the sound of his approach a girl who had just begun to move in the opposite direction paused and turned. The rider took off his cap.

"What's all the fuss about, Kitty?" he asked. She pointed to the poster, which he examined critically.

"It's pretty awful, isn't it?" he said. "But I dare say the show's all right. I've heard of Mardyke's Circus." He dismounted and led his horse forward. The girl stroked the creature's silky nose.

"Well," said the young man, "haven't you anything to say to me, Kitty? You haven't spoken a word yet."

Kitty Bellingham blushed and continued to stroke the horse's nose. "It's too hot to talk," she said.

"That means that you don't want to. Are you angry with me?"

"Angry? Why?" she asked, with a quick glance.

"Oh, a fellow never knows!"

"Well, then, I'm not." This time she gave him her eyes for a moment. "Now I must run back home."

"Wait a minute," he said. "When shall I see you again?" The question was one that the girl could not answer, so she said nothing. "Look here," the other went on, "let me take you to the circus next week. I could drive you into Hurstborne, and bring my sister along as well."

This was a startling proposition, and Kitty's heart jumped. To her young fancy and young blood it seemed to open up a new world. "It'd be lovely," she said, "but——"

"But what?"

"Mother would never let me."

"Well, you aren't a baby. If you can't get round your mother, give her the slip."

"She thinks I'm a baby," said Kitty. After a pause she added: "I'll try to come—I promise you I'll try—and I'll let you know."

John Woodley watched the girl until she turned in at her mother's gate. She looked back, and he waved his hand. Then he tied up his horse outside "The Dog and Gun," watered him, and entered the inn for his own refreshment. He felt that he had com-

mitted himself. He might have taken other girls to the circus, and it would have meant nothing either to them or him, but Kitty was not like other girls. This conviction had the effect of making him unusually serious.

Kitty told her mother about the circus poster, but did not at first say anything about the invitation. Mrs. Bellingham appeared to take no manner of interest in the circus. She was a practical woman, a "manager," as she called herself. The widow of a small farmer, she had been left just enough to live on, and her narrow means were supplemented by poultry-keeping. Kitty looked after the poultry. Sherbury folk could not understand why so shrewd a woman as Mrs. Bellingham kept her daughter at home just to "tend a bird or two." But Mrs. Bellingham knew the reason; she had one treasure, and that treasure she would keep at her side until a stronger power claimed it.

In the evening Kitty returned to the subject of the circus. Mrs. Bellingham was in a softer mood than usual, for during the afternoon she had been going through the contents of an old oak chest, a ceremony punctiliously repeated twice a year. The chest contained her silk wedding-gown, a fine Paisley shawl (of much greater value than she suspected), several lengths of fine hand-woven linen, and various choice articles of attire. These things she had hoarded up for Kitty; she even had a vague fancy that the girl might, when the great occasion arrived, remake and wear the wedding-gown. All these precious things had to be closely examined for signs of moth or damp, and in their folds were placed lavender and dried herbs—the innocent magic of the countryside.

"'Tis won'erful, Kitty, how that silk have kept," Mrs. Bellingham said. "'Tis as bright to-day as when I put it on four-an'-twenty years ago come September."

"You must have looked a picture in it, mother."

"I was never a beauty, my dear. When you look in the glass you see somethin' prettier than ever I was."

"I don't believe it," said Kitty. After a pause she went on: "Mother, I should love to go to the circus."

"Child, what next? Circuses are no places for young maids."

"There's nothing wrong in them, is there?"

"I don't say wrong, but those clown chaps make a lot o' silly jokes. An' then any

minute one o' the ridin' people might come a cropper. 'Tis all crush an' heat an' noise."

"Then you've been to a circus yourself, mother?"

"Once," said Mrs. Bellingham.

"Then why mayn't I go?" The girl added breathlessly: "Mr. Woodley has offered to take me."

"What—old John Woodley?"

"No, young Mr. Woodley. He's going with his sister."

"Oh, is he?" said Mrs. Bellingham. She admitted to herself that there was something flattering in this invitation. The Woodleys farmed on a big scale, were well-to-do, and had reached a higher social level than the late Mr. Bellingham. But young Woodley had the reputation of being a little wild.

"It's main kind o' young Mr. Woodley," Mrs. Bellingham said, "but 'twouldn't do. An', anyway, you couldn't go. Next Tuesday you're off to your Aunt Elizabeth Waitman's for a week."

Kitty had entirely forgotten that. Aunt Elizabeth lived six miles the other side of Hurstborne. "Couldn't I put off going till Friday?"

Mrs. Bellingham shook her head. "It'd never do to put off your Aunt Elizabeth. An' she wouldn't hear of your goin' to the circus." Kitty knew the profound respect which her mother entertained for Mrs. Waitman, her elder sister, and she decided that argument would be useless. Therefore she said no more. It was as though the mere mention of Aunt Elizabeth were like a decree of Fate.

Nevertheless, as the girl lay awake that night, she had visions of the circus which would not be dismissed, visions much more splendid than the reality could ever be. She was sadly disappointed, but she did not shed petulant tears or rail against Mrs. Bellingham. After all—and perhaps that was the real point—John Woodley had asked her to go.

On the appointed day Kitty and her modest luggage went into Hurstborne by the carrier's cart, and from the town she was conveyed to the abode of her Aunt Elizabeth in a venerable pony-chaise which belonged to that lady. Mrs. Waitman—Aunt Elizabeth—was the widow of a Hurstborne corn-chandler, and reputed to be rich.

It was strange that Mrs. Bellingham, after Kitty's departure, found herself, at odd moments, thinking about the circus. She even went down to "The Dog and Gun" and examined the poster, which gaudy work

aroused in her memories long over-laid and almost forgotten. Perhaps, she reflected, it would have been better to let the child go, and make some plausible excuse to Aunt Elizabeth. And people always talked about handsome young men like John Woodley—neither Sherbury nor any other village could exist without such gossip. Moreover, it was entirely to his credit that he should admire Kitty—it showed that he had eyes in his head.

On the Thursday morning of the following week Mrs. Bellingham came to a curious decision. She would go to the circus herself, and if the entertainment were void of offence, she would send a message to Kitty, removing the prohibition.

She was frank enough to admit that this adventure was not undertaken wholly in the interest of her daughter. Those old memories, revived and reviewed across the years by the present sedate and practical Mrs. Bellingham, had a glamour which she could recall and appreciate without hurt to her composed and assured self-respect. She told herself, with a kind of relish, that she had been a harum-scarum young thing, an innocently joyous creature—like Kitty, in fact, but never having the grace and attractiveness of Kitty. Mrs. Bellingham's marriage had come late, and, though it had been happy enough, it had lacked the flush of romance.

Half Sherbury, it appeared, was going to the circus, and Mrs. Bellingham had no fancy to make the pilgrimage with the crowd. Indeed, she had a self-conscious feeling that her neighbours would gossip about her going. She decided, therefore, to walk into Hurstborne early in the afternoon, do some shopping, drop in on a cousin for tea, and be at the circus tent in good time. As she passed "The Dog and Gun," the poster once more drew her eyes. A few captivated children were staring at it open-mouthed. Her heart went out to them.

The afternoon was sultry and windless. No rain had fallen, but it seemed that any moment the edges of the heavy clouds might blur and the deluge come. But Mrs. Bellingham was not afraid of rain. She carried a large umbrella, her skirt was short, and she was well-shod. Her first impulse had been to array herself in her best for the occasion, but on second thoughts she chose the second best.

The huge circus tent had been erected in the fair-field, which is at the upper and western end of Hurstborne, and long before the time of opening a considerable crowd had

gathered. Adventurous little boys tried to make peep-holes through the lacings of the canvas, and mischievous little boys stole up behind and pushed them violently against the yielding wall. A smaller tent, connected with the larger by a tarpaulin tunnel, contained the animals and the performers' dressing-rooms. Everyone wondered where the elephant was. As a matter of fact, there was no elephant; it had resigned its weary life years before, and had never had a successor. But Mardyke's posters remained unaltered.

When Mrs. Bellingham saw the crowd, she wished that she had stayed at home. But she did not turn back, and as she stood a little apart from the waiting throng, something of the spirit of the scene stirred her—the sense of expectancy, of the mysterious, of the unknown. The whole visual impression, indeed, was strange, for the field and the roofs of the town which it overlooked were immersed in a lurid half-twilight that made even the most substantial objects appear unreal. But this threatening aspect of things did not trouble Mardyke's patrons.

There was still half an hour to wait, and Mrs. Bellingham decided to make a tour of the tent before submitting herself to be crushed. It was a fortunate decision, for she discovered, at the far side, another entrance for those who were prepared to pay two shillings for their entertainment. It seemed a wildly extravagant sum, but the spirit of recklessness entered into her. Not more than fifty people were waiting at this entrance. She took out her purse, selected the necessary coin, and, clutching it tightly in her hand, took her place with the others.

Once inside the tent she abandoned herself to the situation. She derived a certain sense of superiority from the fact that the bench on which she sat was covered with dirty red baize instead of being a bare plank. When the people for the cheaper seats came streaming in—a noisy rabble—she smiled complacently. The band faced her from the opposite side. It was a band of the most strident brass, a shattering band. Its stupendous vibrations made the canvas quiver and Mrs. Bellingham's head swim. But that was all part of the fun. She leant forward on her umbrella and waited in tense expectation of what was to come. For the time she had forgotten all about Kitty.

The performance began. It in no way differed from the usual performance of a travelling circus—lady riders with extra-

ordinary nerve and agility and fixed smiles; men riders with equal agility, more muscle, and smiles less fixed; patient horses; clowns making the old jokes and doing marvels with conical hats. But there was glamour in it. Mrs. Bellingham was thrilled, entranced. She applauded with her umbrella, she laughed till tears stood in her eyes, she was completely carried away. Not till the first brief interval came did she think of Kitty. How the child would have enjoyed all this! And where was the harm?

Suddenly she sat upright and stared at the front row of seats, three tiers below her. She had chosen the higher position because the front seats were against the barrier, too close to the dust of the ring and possible danger from infuriated elephants. She stared breathlessly. Who was that grey-haired woman leaning over the barrier? The observed moved uneasily, turned her head, and looked straight at the observer. The eyes of the sisters met. Mrs. Waitman—Aunt Elizabeth—stood up and challenged Mrs. Bellingham with a gesture that seemed to imply, "Dare you come down here?" Mrs. Bellingham accepted the challenge. There was a vacant seat beside Mrs. Waitman, and, amidst violent protests, Mrs. Bellingham plunged for it. She was ruthless in that descent, forgetting both her years and her weight. As she dumped into the vacant seat the band blared in a brassy ecstasy.

"I never thought it of you, Elizabeth!" gasped Mrs. Bellingham.

"Thought what? . . . To see you trampin' on those poor folks behind an' they havin' paid their money same as you—"

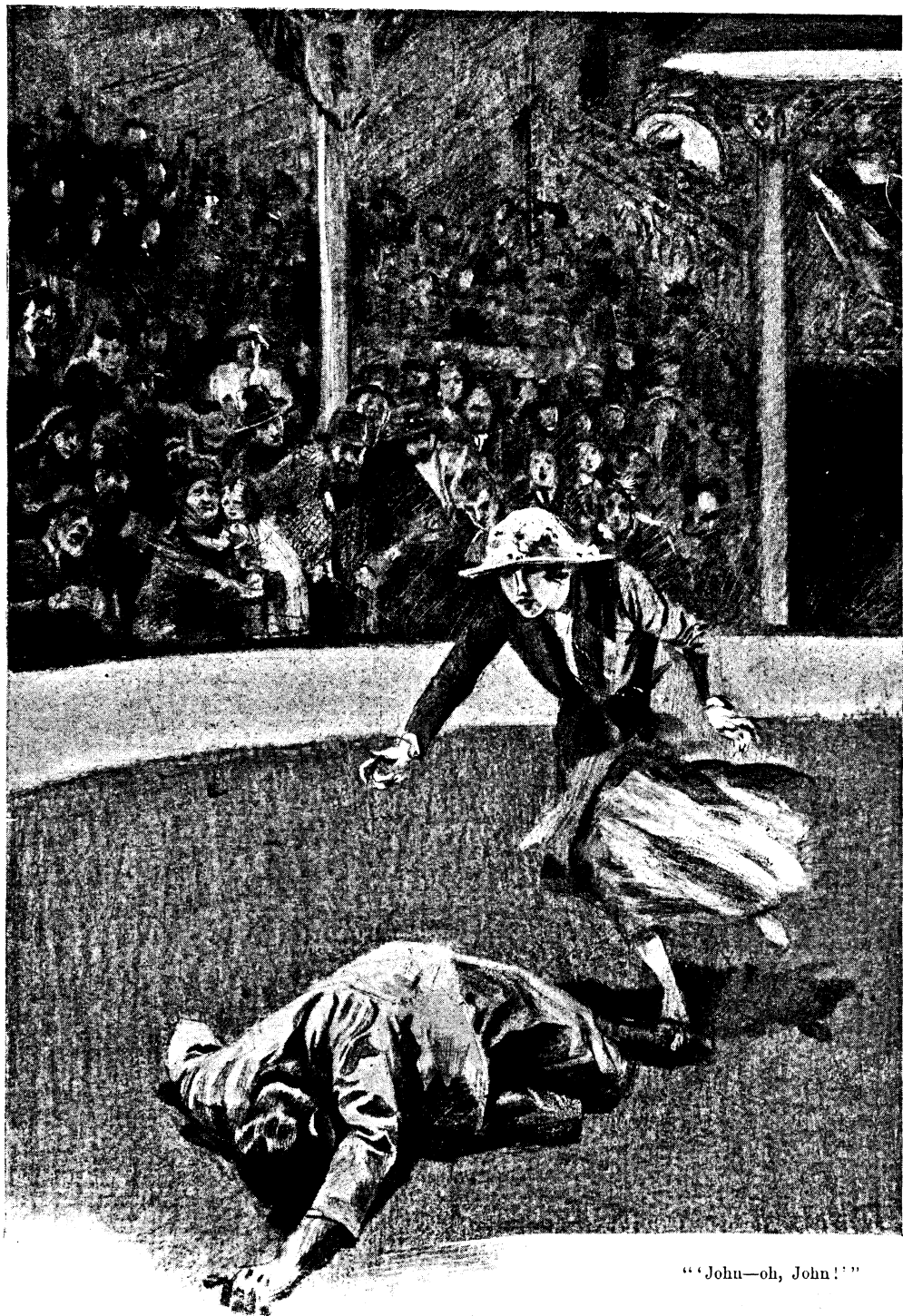
"You know what I mean, so don't try to put me off," Mrs. Bellingham said severely. She had never spoken to her sister severely before: it had generally been the other way about.

"Of course I know, my dear. But I reckon you're livin' in a glass house. You an' me can't afford to throw stones. Do you mind the time when we two runaways went to a little old circus in this very field—sixpence it cost—and got whacked for it?"

"'Twas rememberin' it that brought me here," Mrs. Bellingham said.

Mrs. Waitman regarded her with a provocative smile. "Then why didn't you bring Kitty? I wouldn't have minded her visit bein' put off a day or two—not a bit."

"To tell the truth," said Mrs. Bellingham, "I've made up my mind to send a message



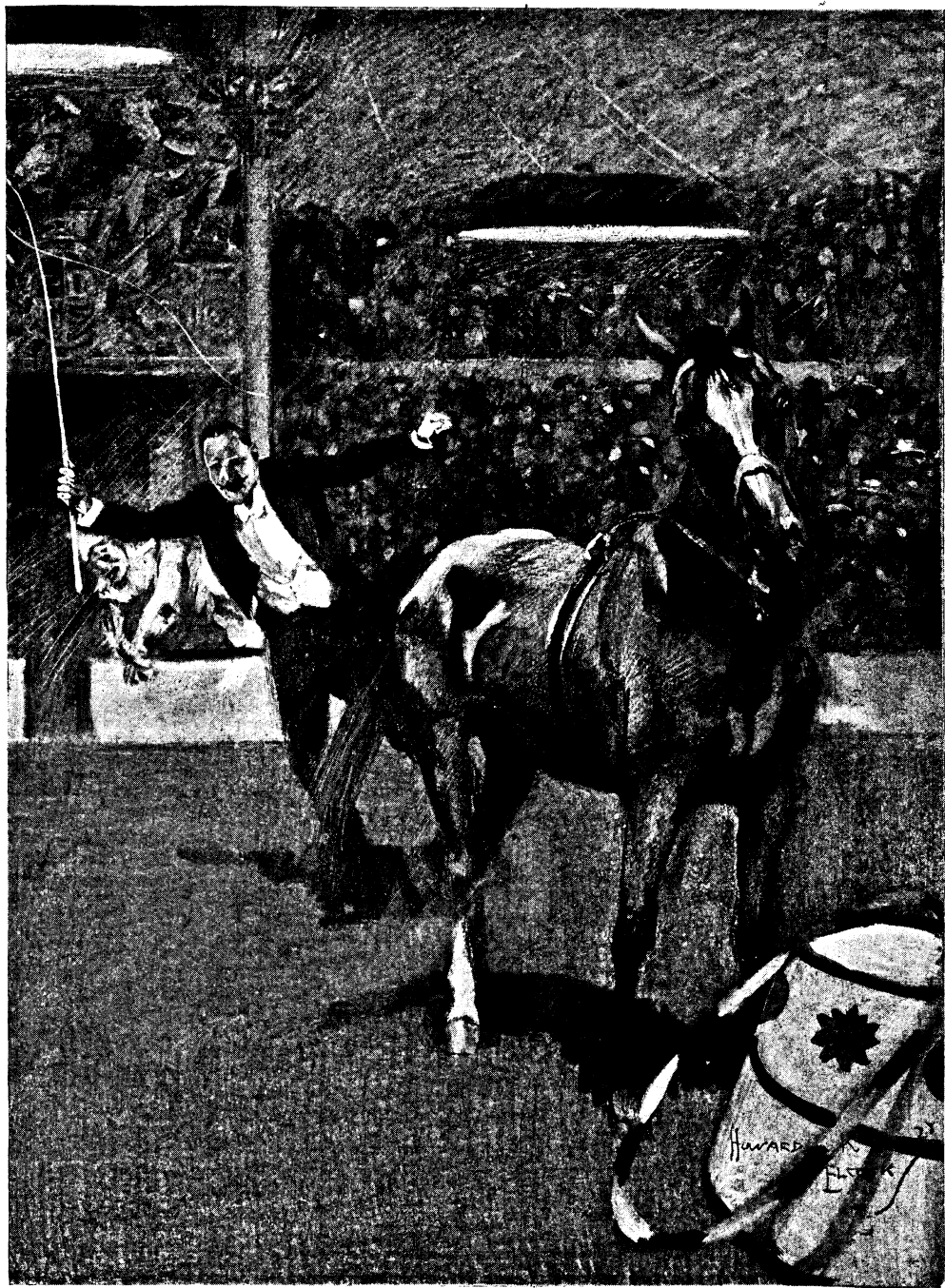
“‘Johu—oh, John!’”

to Kitty, an' you're the one to take it. She may come to the circus to-morrow—tell her that.”

“Am I to tell her that I saw you here?”

“Surely to goodness, Elizabeth, she doesn't know that *you* are? I told her you wouldn't approve of it, for certain sure.”

“Then you were wrong,” said Mrs.



Waitman. "I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I've got a soft heart still, though my outside's old and hard enough, and when I saw those posters I felt a wild young thing again."

"'Twas the same with me," said Mrs. Bellingham. "But if it took you like that, why didn't you bring Kitty?"

"I did bring her."

Mrs. Bellingham was so astounded that for a moment she could find no words. Then she burst out: "Where is she? You haven't surely been an' lost the child!"

"She's safe enough, my dear," Mrs. Waitman said. "She met up with friends

an' stayed behind to speak with 'em, so we got separated."

"Young women friends?" Mrs. Bellingham demanded.

"One of 'em was," said Mrs. Waitman drily.

"Elizabeth, you've played a trick on me, your own sister, that always looked up to you," Mrs. Bellingham said solemnly. "I'd never have thought that you an' Kitty would treat me so."

"Tut, tut!" Mrs. Waitman said. "Don't you be silly. . . . There, Kitty's looking at you!"

Mrs. Bellingham gazed in the direction indicated by Mrs. Waitman's gloved forefinger. Kitty was sitting in the front row, not far away, and with her were the two friends with whom, according to Aunt Elizabeth, she had "met up." One of them was young Woodley, the other was his sister.

"Well, of all the——"

"He's a personable young man—very," Mrs. Waitman said.

"This circus seems to have turned your head, Elizabeth."

"Not a bit of it, my dear."

Kitty turned and saw her mother. Mrs. Bellingham did her best to look reproachful, but she knew that she failed. It seemed to her, indeed, that her own eyes quailed before Kitty's steady scrutiny. Mrs. Bellingham, in fact, was covered with confusion. It was not she who had found out Kitty, but Kitty who had found her out. The girl waved her hand; she was flushed, eager, not in the least ashamed. She spoke to her companions, and Mrs. Bellingham found herself under the fire of three pairs of youthful eyes. She nodded and smiled.

"That's right," said Mrs. Waitman.

"That's the way to take it."

"'Tis all your fault, Elizabeth."

"Yes, blame me; I can bear it. . . . Those two make a rare couple. Made for each other, I should say."

"How your tongue runs on!" said Mrs. Bellingham. "The Woodleys are a'most gentry."

"Tut, tut!" Mrs. Waitman rejoined decisively. "Now pay attention to what's goin' on, or we shan't get value for our money."

A mild-looking horse was led, or rather dragged, into the ring by one of the clowns, who then, affecting extreme terror, ran away and knocked down another clown. The ring-master announced that the mild-

looking horse was the "world's champion buck-jumper," and that it was more than a man's life was worth to attempt to saddle him: therefore he had to be ridden bare-backed. Then the long whip cracked, and a clown approached the world's champion, who immediately began a kind of wild dance, tossing his head and showing yellow teeth. After much skirmishing the clown succeeded in mounting and was immediately thrown. The second clown followed, stuck on for half the course of the ring, and then fell off. Finally Signor Morello (a native of Lambeth) took the buck-jumper in hand. There was no unseating Signor Morello; he was equal to all the well-learned evolutions of the world's champion. There was great applause from the audience, augmented by "See the Conquering Hero" from the band.

A commanding gesture from the ring-master brought silence. If any gentleman present, he said, who fancied himself as a rider, cared to mount the world's champion, let him come into the ring and try. Any gentleman who succeeded, and also managed to hold on for one minute, would be presented by the proprietors of Mardyke's Super-Circus with a solid silver watch.

A hush fell upon the assembly. The world's champion, looking milder than ever, waited dejectedly with lowered head, the clowns grinned in silence, and the ring-master lit a cigarette.

"Good gracious alive!" said Mrs. Bellingham in a loud whisper.

Young John Woodley had risen. Kitty laid a restraining hand on his arm, but he laughingly put it aside. He vaulted the barrier and stood in the ring. The Sherbury contingent led off with yells of delight, and these were taken up and multiplied into a mighty discord. The ring-master bowed and cracked his whip. The world's champion raised his head and pricked his ears; perhaps he had been dreaming of a quiet life. Woodley did not wait for any preliminaries: a quick run, a leap-frog jump, and he was on the back of the world's champion.

The creature appeared to be surprised: he stood stock still until the whip cracked again. At that he started off at a slow gallop. Half a minute passed and John was still up. Then the whip cracked twice and the horse began his violent unseating tactics. The rider's superb knee-grip held and he kept his head. The minute had almost run out.

All at once there was a sharp pattering

on the canvas ; then the rising murmur and swish of rain filled the tent. A flash of lightning left the spectators blinking, and a terrific crash of thunder shook the great central pole of the tent and set every bench a-quiver. But the adventurous rider still held the attention of the audience : the human element prevailed.

The world's champion stopped dead and Woodley was almost down. Another flash and the horse leapt forward, broke into a wild gallop, stumbled, and fell. Woodley pitched forward and lay still.

For a moment nothing was heard but the drumming of the rain. Before the ring-master and attendants had recovered themselves, a girl was over the barrier and in the ring. She ran to the fallen man and leant over him.

"John—oh, John!" she said. The words, though not loudly spoken, carried with curious distinctness in the tense atmosphere.

Woodley moved, raised himself to his

knees, scrambled to his feet and stood upright. He held out both hands to Kitty and laughed.

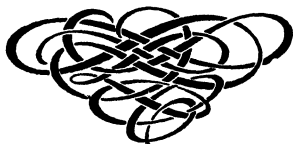
A roar went up such as had never before been heard in Mardyke's Super-Circus : it was thrilling, exultant. Many eyes grew wet, and a few women sobbed. One of these was Mrs. Bellingham.

"A fine young man, that," said Mrs. Waitman, dabbing at her eyes. "He's all right."

"Elizabeth, I'll never stand in her way again," Mrs. Bellingham said chokingly.

"I should think not, my dear."

There was another roar when the ring-master detached his own watch from an ornate chain and handed it to Woodley. The champion's fall, he said, not being part of the programme, the rider was entitled to his reward. And there was a still greater roar when Woodley handed the watch to Kitty. It was a crowning occasion for Mardyke's Super-Circus.



A LANDMARK.

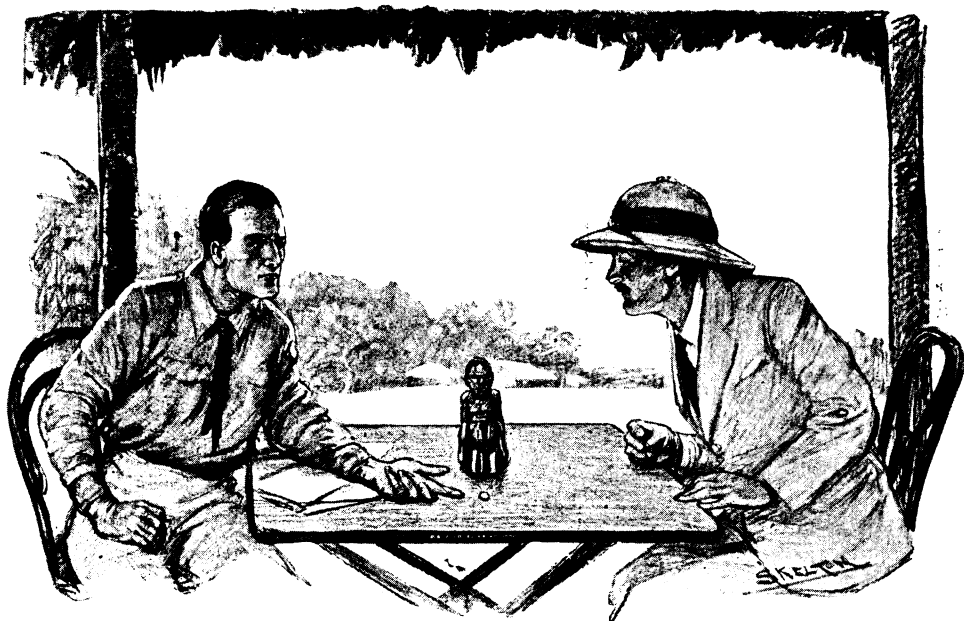
UPON the hills to-day, while drowed
A dewy world 'neath dawn's first beams,
I found a pile of stone that housed,
Long years ago, my youthful dreams.

So long their sleep, yet Time and Space
Withdrew their shrouds . . . Like magic fel-
Trim lawn, warm creeper to their place;
Again your voice was audible,

And still across the years you sent
A child's clear gaze. Then suddenly
Only a mould'ring monument
To hopes that did not fructify

Rear'd wearied limbs . . . No more a lad,
I wonder'd, lingering there alone,
If your life's house is creeper-clad
Or but an empty pile of stone.

GEOFFREY FYSON.



"From his pocket he rolled a diamond the size of a marble. 'That was inside.'"

THEORY

By A. R. GRAHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

HALF-WAY between the native town and the new railway that was creeping through the bush the Trading Company's agent lived alone.

That the place was swept and tidy was Gowan's first impression. The second of a fateful series was its bareness, an air of unadorned utility—there were no frills, no fancies, no faith.

In the shadow of the verandah thatch a young man slowly turned a beautiful face, shockingly lifeless and indifferent, with a dull gaze that saw Gowan as a wearisome happening all in the day's work.

Gowan wanted a passage on a north-bound construction train, and a cultured, far-away voice, that had only just enough vitality to carry the required couple of yards, informed him there would be three days to wait; the railway rest-hut was empty, fresh provisions were in the native market (the boys would see to that)----

The voice tailed off; there seemed nothing more to be said.

Gowan turned away, feeling himself dismissed. It would have been an impertinence to intrude a banal, perfunctory sociability upon a man who seemed utterly absorbed in some private grief.

Three days, and then a straggling, jolting construction train would come toiling up from the steamy coast—long, heavy days, uneventful and blazing hot.

Gowan needed always some form of activity to keep in check the nervous excitability of his brain, and so on the first day he grabbed a gun and wandered disconsolately over the burnt scrub to where a line of forest loomed.

In front the railway cut straight and deep into the heavy bush. All across the northern sky swept a curiously even line of tree-tops, as straight and clear as if cut with a great knife.

There must be a reason for this. The eager forest surged up under the West African sun to a certain height, and then, somehow, somewhere, came a word of command, and silence.

The silence got on Gowan's nerves; the jungle seemed to stand stock still while a visible torrent of irresistible sinister energy poured down from a brazen sky on the waiting, momentarily inert, life of the forest.

"Waiting?" said Gowan at last. "What are you waiting for?"

A long while he stared with a wide, intense gaze on the cut where the line of the jungle top broke and a deep dark wound ran through the brush. The rail metals gleamed dully.

"Queer place," he said, suddenly assuming a common-sense everyday voice and deportment, and turning away.

For a time he drifted parallel to the forest, and then, giving up the pretence, definitely made for the Company trading store, where in the distance a red-shirted figure was just visible. The fact was that the tall, heart-broken figure of the agent obstinately recurred in the foreground of all his thoughts, together with a sense of disquiet, of something requiring to be done.

It was too early to be out, anyhow; the three o'clock sun struck down, and the earth radiated strongly. Only the splash of red, soft yet bright, in the shade of the verandah relieved the drab monotony of mud walls and dusty scrub as he approached the store.

In spite of the company of a clump of trees, the small group of buildings showed pathetically lonely; a mile of dried-up, sun-cracked scrub land in front, then the forest wall; behind, the monotonous scrub lost itself in the distance. In the sultry, overbright atmosphere objects had a look of obvious unreality, very still, clear-cut, and neutral-coloured. Gowan hesitated towards the store. The red shirt was stooping over a camp table; it was not the staid red of a Far West prospector, but a fresh pinky hue that seemed somehow out of place there. A careful neatness in dress seemed part of a perplexing make-up. Feverishly Gowan searched his store of small-talk for an opening remark as he came up.

He was going to meddle, explore, and, if possible, help. That, or be for ever haunted. One can't pass a dying man. Physical danger is never refused aid, and here was something worse. In every fibre

of his supersensitive, highly-strung system Gowan sensed a tragic issue.

The man was going under. Some take transplanting hardly, and it's a big jump from a crowded sociable island to a solitary trading store in the bush. The bush had got him, Gowan understood that. Public school code and manners would not be much use against solitude, the upbringing of a country gentleman and the outlook of a younger son would be little support in the meaning stillness of the quiet hours. But a man won't die of boredom and loneliness. Something else, something, perhaps, grown out of that—Nothing seemed to apply.

He found himself jerking out some vague conversation—about the heat, the rain that still held off, and so on.

"What about tea? Could you come across to my place? I should be awfully glad if you could."

But Rivers was busy, he said. "Sorry, but I have too much work at the moment."

Gowan was inspired. "Well"—he hesitated—"the fact is—this evening, if you could, for dinner, or after. The fact is, I'm pretty fed up—in a bad way, fever—nerves—that sort of thing. You'd be doing me a kindness."

He felt he was lying well, and with effect, for Rivers promised to look in for an hour after dinner.

As a good Samaritan that night Gowan failed. In the basic matter of his own self-control he wobbled dangerously; with enthusiastic altruism he touched the raw surfaces of the wounds he would have healed. After a long, difficult exchange of generalities, he began talking quietly enough of the country.

"It's upsetting," he said, "these days before the rain: exciting in a sort of way. I've seen a native crowd go crazy at the first shower, clean yelling mad. I cleared. Have you noticed a sort of suspense that hangs around? All the year, but different at this time. It's rather a difficult country to live in, in a way. Do you often go down to the river?"

"It's not far," Rivers answered evasively. He sat at the table in front of a modest peg, not easily, but hunched and defensive. Gowan hardly looked at him; he didn't need to—he sensed keenly the first sparks of dawning interest.

"Well," he went on, giving no time for Rivers to speak, "I shouldn't like to have to watch that creek for a year, would you?" Suddenly he flung the question at his guest,

but waited for no verbal reply. Rivers was looking at him now, not at the table.

"The more it changes, the more it's the same thing, as they say. It seems to mean something. So does the bush. It's heavy down there, I should say. What is going on in this place? It's enough to drive a man crazy. One seems so unnecessary. It's the sun, of course, nothing but the sun. It goes on drawing things out of the earth, wherever there's a drop of moisture, and a sort of greedy life springs up. We're intruders, trespassers; we've got to fight for a footing or go under with fever or drink or just home-sickness."

He was walking about now, up and down with a long, impatient stride.

"They say we only live by desire—the desire to live. It weakens sometimes. We just turn our faces to the wall. I often think of the fellows just come out to a job like yours. Someone at home has stuffed them with lies. Not wrong facts—I don't mean that—but just leaving out the things that really count. They get to picture themselves living a free sort of life, controlling with a knowing mastery a lot of trade and labour—strolling about in a romantic sort of hat, and directing things. Heaven help them! In two years they probably find that the money goes about half as far as they thought, and there is no future; existence is a monotonous struggle with boring accounts and native cunning. Our system does seem to bring out a lot of bad in the black—sordid work—dodging trickery, penny-catching paltry fraud, and over it all a sort of senseless obstructionism. You know? I thought so. You see, a lot of them know they are being exploited, drifting further into the grip of the industrial machine and so on, and they resist. I don't suppose they think it out. They just feel it somehow."

Gowan began a more direct appeal. An odd, convincing power of eloquence overcame his caution, and his tongue became a lash.

Rivers listened with a half smile; something of the sullen defensiveness had gone already.

"There's a way out—several ways out, but a frontal attack is the best. Get rid of the idea that the circumstances make the show—they don't. One can dominate, control, exploit them. Exploit them! Adventure! Get on top or go under. It's a fertile land full of possibilities. The natives will work for themselves if not for

you. One can use that. Do something! Market their goods for them. Don't tell me that the Company tries everything that pays. If the Company doesn't allow you scope, leave it, and don't be particular. You know the story of the man who landed on the coast with enough money to buy one cow, bought it up country and drove it himself to the coast, made a profit, and drove two. The cattle king! *He* didn't get into a rut! Do you know there's money to pick up all around you? It's not the money that matters in the long run—it's doing things or not doing them. Only a worm gives in without adventuring. What if one fails? Are you succeeding now? Look here, I'll show you a start." He dived to a tin case and flung it open. "A small start, but a good one."

From the moment that Gowan put them on the table—two small figures of carved wood—something was added; the situation took on an unaccountable extra of intensity. He saw Rivers start, saw a hand move out as if to take the nearest figure, noted the change of mind.

But as he approached his climax, the interest of the subject became absorbing. At the time he missed the significance of the other's behaviour, and saw no hint of warning.

At midnight, alone, sleepless, and worried, he was trying to reconstruct. All around, under the bright moon, as he wandered amongst the low trees between the end house and the store, were the thousand tiny rustling sounds that together make the midnight silence of the bush—countless small secret things that crawl and hop and run by night to live.

Gowan was lost in an effort to understand what had happened.

First came the wooden figures, a century old, and of priceless artistry. He had unfolded a plan, based on evidence as much as conjecture. He had talked of what those figures stood for, considered as artistic creations, not as antiques. A Birmingham factory could reproduce them by the thousand, mechanically accurate and devoid of interest and significance, but there was another way. The savage mind still existed, with all its queer illuminating outlook on life, a hundred years since the rising flood of cheap and gaudy European trinkets had swamped the native art. Bright mirrors, beads, and tawdry jewellery had killed native demand.

The patient, mysterious carver of hard

wood, unconsciously articulating in accentuated relief the significant aspects of his ancient hereditary conceptions, mystical, vivid and profound, involving to the Western mind a fresh outlook on the whole possibilities of Art and Man—this artist was now unproductive, a petty trader, perhaps, or a day labourer.

But he existed—that was Gowan's chief point—and he had produced a masterpiece and its modern copy—a copy that confounded mensuration, mechanically inaccurate, but powerfully and individually reiterating the idea. "It's the idea they copy," he had said.

With a high reward for the real thing and contempt for the slipshod makeshift, the bush would provide a sensation for the connoisseur and collector, and a lasting stimulus and joy for people of understanding and taste.

"You can treble your salary in your spare time," he had said to Rivers. "I will do the business part."

There was nothing in all that to account for Rivers's actions. It was the last few minutes that sent him off into a rage, when Gowan had turned on him, hurt by a further relapse into sullen indifference, and, with intent to rouse, had taunted and stung. Gowan had a nasty knack of wounding sarcasm, and flabbiness exasperated him.

Suddenly Rivers stood up, but he said nothing, just strode out into the night, head down, with an inarticulate growl, lurched out. It was queer.

"To-morrow. . . ." Gowan muttered, thinking of an abject apology and perhaps a more gentle appeal.

Then the voluble silence of the night was broken by a step—erratic, striding steps from the storehouse to his own temporary home. Unthinkingly, Gowan slipped into shadow, and the next instant felt a chill crawl down his spine.

Something in the tall, hunched figure, a lack of order in its movements, made Gowan crouch back to the window opposite his bed.

Inside, the lamp threw a huge swaying shadow on the wall. It was Rivers, his straight Greek features twisted horribly, in his hand a long native dagger, a wild light blazing in his eye.

One glance, and Gowan ducked, aghast. "Mad!" he whispered to himself. "Good Heavens!" and began stealthily to creep away.

A paralysing fear of madness took hold

of him. With clumsy, stealthy haste he was trying to get away, but there was no time. Again the irregular, striding steps, and this thing that laughed and swayed passed by.

It was minutes before the weight of his sudden panic lifted and Gowan slunk into the hut. Nothing was disturbed, but a small black carving was gone from the table.

Not until daybreak was followed by muffled natives passing in front of the hut did Gowan fall exhausted into a brief sleep. He woke, still haunted by the memory of the night.

It was insanity he had seen blazing in Rivers's eyes. What was the extent and end of it? Was it a dangerous madman he had entertained? And what was to be done now?

A terrible suspicion was lurking in his mind; at last he faced it squarely. Was it possible that the man had been sane enough—just sick and nerve-strained—and then suddenly, goaded beyond endurance, had the delicate balance of his reason tilted? Had the last shred of self-control given way under his own senseless, meddlesome upbraidings? These were appalling thoughts that must in any case be verified.

In the middle of the morning, wretched and anxious, with a boy in attendance, he went to see. Rivers was sitting before a table, white and sick, the man he had first seen, red-shirted, in the shade of the verandah only a day before, shockingly lifeless and weary, but calm and seemingly reasonable.

"I've come to apologise," Gowan began hurriedly. "I was unpardonably rude, and you were seedy. Anyone could see how down you were. There's no excuse. I——"

Rivers pointed to a chair, and then sat looking at him seated. He was going to speak. Gowan realised that a dozen words were all that he had heard from him till now.

"Yes, I was pretty low when you came along—I have been for some time. Do you know I went back to the hut last night?"

"Er—yes. As a matter of fact——"

"Where were you?"

"I was outside. I saw you. Please don't say any more. Whatever happened, it was my fault."

Rivers got up.

"Wait!" he said, and reached to the ledge under the thatch. He put on the table the stolen carving, beautifully complete at first sight, shining dully with the fine polish of age.

"Hullo!" Gowan was nervous and preoccupied, or he would have tried not to be surprised. From the centre of the rounded belly of the otherwise flawless figure a segment had been removed. A small cavity was exposed.

"I'm in a worse hole than you know," he groaned. "My wife—yes, I have a wife and kids at home—she's ill, and there's no money. I've been terribly worried, and this place is on my nerves. Then you come and jeer at my lack of enterprise. How do you know what I've tried? One must have some capital, and then, somehow, when you ragged me about it with *that* in your hand"—he pointed to the mysterious seated figure gleaming smoothly by the side of the treasure it had guarded so long—"somehow I got mad suddenly. I came back here and had a couple of drinks, and then—I don't know—I think I must have been mad.



"One glance . . . 'Mad!' he whispered to himself."

"You were about right," Rivers went on bitterly. "It's the idea they copy. I've seen a figure like that before. Same idea, but in that case someone had been there before. It's one way of sending valuables from one person to another, inside." From his pocket he rolled a diamond the size of a marble. "That was inside."

It lay in the centre of the table, flashing a hard bright beam to Gowan's fascinated eye. For a moment he forgot the man in the sparkle of the jewel, and then forgot the jewel in a wave of remorse and pity as Rivers continued.

I don't remember well—a thief. . . ." He dropped his head on his arm.

To Gowan, in the silence that followed, came a ray of light. This remorse for an unaccomplished theft, in a man who came to steal, with madness in his face and a knife in his hand, might it be that some fantastic trick of memory had mercifully obliterated the major fact of the murderous

intention? Here was an eleventh-hour hope—worth trying, anyhow. No one else knew. Let it go at that.

Gowan sprang to his feet. "No!" he

be our capital. For Heaven's sake, let me help!"

* * * * *

Months later Gowan leaned against an



"It was Rivers, his straight Greek features twisted horribly, in his hand a long native dagger."

said. "No, you're no thief! Look here, you must let me help. I was a fool last night, but I meant well. Will you try it out, that scheme of mine? This stone will

upper berth on a home-bound liner and glanced pensively from time to time at the bright water heaving gently close at hand, a steady sheen of molten steel near

the shore. The port-hole framed it, and a line of grey-green foliage, refulgent under the sun's blaze.

It was real, and to Gowan a fateful and challenging land, for all its dreamlike brightness and appearance of airy unreality. Through the port-hole came a sluggish air, convincingly hot and faintly charged with the sickly sweet scent of the land. It suggested many things—the strong, sappy growth of the swamps, the penetrating rankness of the evaporating mud flats, and, far inland, the heavy scent of the forest.

Gowan had a chronically careworn air—that of an anxious man troubled in his sensitive soul by contact with life. He began moving and arranging a group of coloured objects on the lid of his box. Outside, noise and shouts showed the liner about to start on her homeward passage.

The shore bell sounded, but Gowan was absorbed in his play. The intolerable burr of the ship's siren shook the air. With an

almost covetous smile he was fingering the strange collection before him, samples out of a case he had just picked up at Lagos goods depot on his way home, trifles of wood—table furniture apparently—figures, trays, bowls and the like, all of carved wood. Some were finished exquisitely, others, carved with a swift, bold knife, had the charm of a sketch. Rivers had vastly expanded the original idea. A few figures were draped and stained in bright, strong colours with the unerring taste of the West African native. All were beautiful, strange, asymmetrical, barbaric and satisfying.

Gowan heaved a sigh of satisfaction. "That was a near thing," he said, and began to pack them carefully.

The last to be packed was a personal gift from Rivers to himself—a gift he had asked at the last, with a cold fear clutching at his heart. It had been given gladly with a serene and wonderful unconsciousness—a long-bladed Hausa knife.



I WILL CHAIN A DAY.

OH, I will chain a day that it serve me !
 The sun shall make me a garment fair,
 The wind in his running shall so observe me
 That I shall be guarded with flying hair ;
 The flowers that garland that day's achieving,
 The apple-orchards that cry its name,
 Oh, these I shall pilfer to laughing grieving,
 And fill my chamber with scent and flame.

Oh, I will take a day for my riding !
 The morn shall spread me a moorland wide,
 The noon shall build me an inn for hiding,
 And the quick eve run at my saddle-side ;
 The woods that border that day's wild roaming,
 The forests of night austere and deep,
 Oh, from these I shall gather to grace my homing,
 And fill my room with the boughs of sleep.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

CAPTAIN STANWAY'S GUN-LOADER

By THEODORE GOODRIDGE ROBERTS

ILLUSTRATED BY E. WALL COUSINS

FROM the River St. John, where her grand-parents had settled after the Revolutionary War, Nancy Blismore was sent to England to school. For several years after finishing school she remained in England with relatives. There she first met young Captain Thomas Stanway.

When Nancy was eighteen years old, she returned to her home in New Brunswick. Captain Stanway resigned his commission in the Army, and followed her. They were married with considerable pomp, and then went to live for a while with the bride's parents. Stanway bought a big island in the river, not far from the Blismore place, and on a natural mound near the head of the island he built a house. In June of the year following their marriage they moved into the new house on Haystack Island. The house stood among fine elms, and looked out on hundreds of wild, rich meadows and on the blue reaches of the river.

In those days Captain Stanway always dressed according to the latest fashions. He wore long side-whiskers, brown and fine as silk, and in his left eye he wore an eyeglass. But he was a good citizen, a good husband, a good farmer, and, later, a good father. He had a tender heart, although his manner was sometimes abrupt with strangers. When he was angry or disgusted, his grey eyes could harden like glass. The smoky-faced Malacites stood in awe of him until they knew him.

One day late in September Captain Stanway breakfasted by candlelight. The ducks were flying—dusky duck, teal, sheldrake, and wood duck gathered in the ponds and the backwaters of the Islands for their south-west flight. The Captain's two fine fowling-pieces had been cleaned the night before. When the Captain had finished his

breakfast, he sent for Gabe Paul, who was a cunning hunter. Word came back that Gabe was very ill, but that Gabe's sister's husband, Noel Bear, would take his place for the day's shooting. The Captain went immediately to Gabe's hut, in order to give the sick man a dose of medicine if he should need it. Gabe was not at home. His squaw knew nothing of his illness; all she knew was that he had set off an hour before for the mainland, to hunt moose with Beaver Bill.

The Captain was angry with Gabe Paul. He was so much vexed, in fact, that he spoke rather sharply to Gabe's substitute, Noel Bear. Noel, whose home was about three miles up river on the eastern shore, had spent the night on the island. He seemed a dull-witted, sulky fellow. The Captain gave him a few lessons in quick and accurate loading in the gun-room at the back of the big hall. Then the Indian hung the flasks of powder and shot about his neck, put the percussion caps into one pocket of his shabby coat and the wads into the other.

Followed by two Indian boys who worked on the island farm, and two brown spaniels, the Captain and his loader set out. It was still early. The sun was on the horizon, and its level golden rays shot over wood, river, and meadow. There was a nip of frost in the air; narrow yellow leaves rustled down from the willows; the aftermath glistened with drops of dew.

The Captain led the way across the meadows to a marshy place that sloped down to the grey-brown sand of the shore. On the right a gully, knee-deep with tall grasses and sappy water-lilies, ran at a long slant into the interior of the island. The gully was flooded at high water, but now was almost dry.

The two boys moved on noiselessly; the

Captain, Noel Bear, and the dogs took post in a clump of shore willows. The Captain moved forward a step or so, in order to have a clearer view. The loader stood a yard behind him, with a sulkily scowl on his dark face. The dogs lay flat at the edge of the thicket.

Suddenly, with a flapping and splashing, five ducks rose from among the lily pads and came flying down toward the ambush. Up went the Captain's gun; the report of the right barrel was followed close by the clap of the left. One duck dropped from the flock and struck the ground with a thud.

Instantly more birds appeared in the air. Some flew directly over the clump of willows, some passed to the right, and some to the left. Their short strong wings whistled through the air. The Captain exchanged the empty gun for the loaded one. Again he fired the two barrels. Again he exchanged guns. Still the birds came on; sometimes one dropped, sometimes two. They flew along, singly, in pairs, in groups, with their necks straight out. Their wings, set far back on their bodies, shrilled in the air. The Captain shot fast, and Noel Bear rammed the charges into the empty gun as if his life depended upon it. The white powder-smoke clung to the tops of the willows like a fog.

Suddenly the smoky covert and the sunlit air were shaken by an explosion unlike any report of a gun. A torn and twisted fragment of metal, which had been the powder-flask, hummed into the air like a great bee. Noel Bear let the gun that he had been loading fall to the ground. The Captain turned like a flash and caught the reeling Indian in his arms. The Captain's face was white, for he knew what had happened. The hot guns had been loaded too fast. Some sparks had ignited the powder as Noel was pouring it from the flask, and the flask had exploded in his right hand. His whole hand was scorched and torn; three fingers had been blown away.

Captain Stanway had fought for his young Queen, Victoria, but nothing he had seen of battle and of death had ever shaken him so much.

"I will carry you to the house," he said in a husky voice.

Noel resisted feebly, leaned heavily against the Captain's broad shoulder, then slid, fainting, to the ground. Stanway lifted him in both arms and strode off toward the house.

Mrs. Stanway came running across the meadow to meet them. The Captain laid

the unconscious man on a couch in the wide hall, and forced a stimulant between his lips. Mrs. Stanway washed the torn hand. The Captain, who knew something of the rough surgery of that day, got his surgical outfit. He put several stitches in the torn flesh, dressed the burns with a pure salve, and thoroughly bandaged the hand and arm.

Presently Noel Bear opened his eyes and stared sullenly at the Captain. He turned his head a little, looked at Mrs. Stanway, and made an effort to sit up. Captain Stanway pressed him gently back on the couch.

"Me go home now," Noel said.

"You can't. You are badly hurt, and I must look after the wound. You must stay here for a few days. I'm sorry this happened, Noel Bear."

"Me go now," said Noel stubbornly.

"You can't. You must stay here and have your hand attended to."

"Me go home."

The Captain looked at his wife. Mrs. Stanway stooped over the Malecite.

"I want you to stay and be properly doctored, Noel," she said gently. "We will send food and blankets to your family."

"Nope. Me go home now."

"We must let him go," said Mrs. Stanway to her husband. "We can go to his cabin tomorrow morning and dress his hand again."

So Noel's bandaged arm was placed in a sling. Provisions were packed for him, and he was helped out of the house and down to the shore. The boys who had driven the ducks manned one of the Captain's canoes. Noel was placed amidships on a comfortable seat of hay and blankets. The Stanways stood on the sand and watched the canoe cross the channel of deep water and turn up-stream along the eastern shore of the mainland. The Captain sighed.

"Nancy," he said, "I'd give a hundred pounds—two hundred—if that had not happened."

The boys put Noel Bear ashore at the foot of a narrow path that led up to his cabin among the spruces. Noel went slowly up to the cabin, and met his wife just outside the low doorway. The squaw uttered a sharp cry of dismay at sight of his drawn face and bandaged arm. The three children—the eldest only five years old—came from the underbrush and gazed wide-eyed at their father.

Noel sat down and told the woman to fetch the blankets and basket of food from the shore. She obeyed, and was back in half



"He came out from that furnace the second time, carrying the baby on one arm and dragging the
"quaw by the waist."

a minute. Then the whole family, with the exception of the baby, fell to devouring the good things from the Stanway kitchen. Noel told his story while they ate. He told it in the Malecite language, for the squaw knew only a few words of English.

"He cares not so much for the poor Malecite as for his dogs," said Noel. "His guns blow up when the powder goes down, from much shooting, so he gives them to me to load. He thinks it no great thing if the right hand of Noel Bear is destroyed."

Noel lay down on the new blankets in the sunshine and pretended to sleep. An hour passed. The woman and children went into the forest to gather firewood. Noel crawled into the hut and took his gun from the corner. It was a huge flintlock. He loaded it hastily, slipped the powder-horn into the front of his shirt, and then carried the gun down to the shore and hid it in a clump of grass. He felt weak and tired, but the desire for revenge was so hot in his heart that he paid no heed to his physical discomfort.

His good canoe he had left on Haystack Island, but from the bushes beside the path he dragged an ancient craft that he had not used since the year before. He built a little fire and hung his resin pot above it. Later his wife helped him to resin the open seams and holes in the bark of the canoe. In reply to the woman's question where he was going, he only grunted.

He slept for several hours. It was nearly dusk when he launched the canoe with his left hand and stepped aboard. The gun lay in the bottom of the canoe, covered by a blanket. Using the paddle as a pole and working it with his left hand, he slid slowly and noiselessly down-stream, close to the shore. The twilight deepened quickly, and a few stars appeared. A light wind awoke and blew from the south-east, spreading a thin veil of mist over the stars.

Noel's plan of revenge was fixed. It was very simple—a hand for a hand. He knew well how the owner of Haystack Island spent his autumn evenings. He had seen him last night in the big sitting-room, with his feet to the fire and his back to the windows, candles at his elbow, and a book held high in his right hand. Noel would kneel on the floor of the verandah, and rest the muzzle of the gun on the window-sill. It would not be hard. A right hand for a right hand.

By this time Noel's whole arm as well as his hand was throbbing with pain, but he continued on his way. It was very dark. A number of ducks, frightened up from the

river ahead, flew over the canoe so low that Noel heard the rush of the air in their wings, but it was so dark that he could not see them. What had frightened the birds? Noel let the boat drift and listened. He heard a splashing, as more ducks rose from the river in front. Then he heard the light, dry click of the haft of a paddle striking upon the gunwale of a canoe. He heard the *slop* of the paddle among the clinging lily stems.

The strange canoe passed in the darkness within three yards of Noel Bear. A few minutes later Noel continued on his silent way, dully wondering who else was abroad that night. Most likely it was some deer hunter, he thought. At last he turned the canoe out from the shallow water and pointed it straight for the upper end of the island. He needed neither light nor compass. By the time the bow of his canoe slipped among the island grasses, his head was aching dully, his right arm burned and throbbed. He reeled as he stepped ashore, but he managed to pull the heavy gun from its hiding-place.

He staggered up towards the lights of the big white house. He looked in at one of the windows of the sitting-room, and for a moment a film of darkness dropped before his eyes; then it vanished like a drifting mist. He saw the fire on the hearth, the big chair with its back to him, the table and the candles. But the Captain was not there. Mrs. Stanway sat in the chair with a book in her hand.

A purple mist flooded across Noel's vision, and he lowered the gun to the floor of the verandah. He swayed for a moment, then sank noiselessly beside the gun.

While Noel Bear lay unconscious on the floor of the verandah, the Captain drew near to Noel's cabin, three miles away. His good heart had sent him out that night to see the wounded man's hand. It was he who had passed Noel in the dark.

As the Captain rounded a point, he saw a light on the wooded bank. There was something not quite natural about that light. It was lurid with smoke, and too large for a cooking fire. Red sparks rose from it into the tops of the spruces.

With a few strokes of the paddle, the Captain drove the canoe to land, jumped out, and ran up the path. He found the hut front and the roof of the hut ablaze. One of the new blankets had been carelessly flung half in and half out of the doorway; the fire had crept along it from the embers before the door to the curtain of bark. The

flames had crawled up the wall and poles to the roof, and the heavy smoke had flooded in upon the sleeping family.

Captain Stanway shouted and dashed at the burning hut. He plunged through the blazing doorway and groped wildly about the floor. The place was thick with smoke and as hot as an oven. The Captain grabbed something in each hand, turned, and plunged out of the hut. He had dragged the two older children with him. He laid them on the ground and plunged again into the burning cabin. As he came out from that furnace the second time, carrying the baby on one arm and dragging the squaw by the waist, the roof fell in with a roar.

Gasping for breath, the Captain lay flat for several minutes. He brushed his scorched face with his stinging palms. His eyebrows and his flowing whiskers were gone, and his clothing was peppered with black holes. He heard the woman groan, turned to her, and shook her violently by the shoulders until she opened her eyes. She looked up at him with fear in her eyes.

"Where is Noel?" he asked. "I could not find him."

The woman could not understand him, but she caught the sound of her husband's name.

"Noel go 'way," she said.

Twenty minutes later the Captain had brought the children back to consciousness, and had made the whole family get into his canoe. He removed his heavy shooting-coat and put it round the baby. Although worried and puzzled about Noel, he saw that his first duty was to the woman and children. In spite of the painful condition of his blistered hands, he pushed the canoe along at a good pace. The baby slept in its mother's arms. The woman moaned continuously from fright and pain. She felt cold and very ill; she had breathed a great deal of smoke.

The Captain reached the head of his own island at last, and sent a shout ringing across the frosty meadows. Then he set off for the house with the older children in his arms,

and the woman, with the baby, at his heels. A lantern, swinging close to the ground, appeared from the shadowy bulk of the house. It was Mrs. Stanway who carried it. When the Captain explained the situation, she sped away to rouse the cook and the other servants. She wanted hot water and food; she wanted fires lighted and beds aired.

The Captain went straight to the sitting-room, with Noel's bewildered squaw still close at his heels. The woman, with the baby still sleeping in her arms, sank down upon a rug on the floor; the Captain put the other children on a couch. Mrs. Stanway entered, and cried out at sight of her husband; she had not seen him clearly by the light of the lantern. His lips were swollen, his eyes were red, his hair was singed, his brow and chin were black and raw. She was about to fling herself into his arms, when a noise at the window caused them both to turn sharply. They saw a face at the window, pressed closed to the glass.

The Captain sprang forward and threw up the window-sash.

"Noel Bear!" he said.

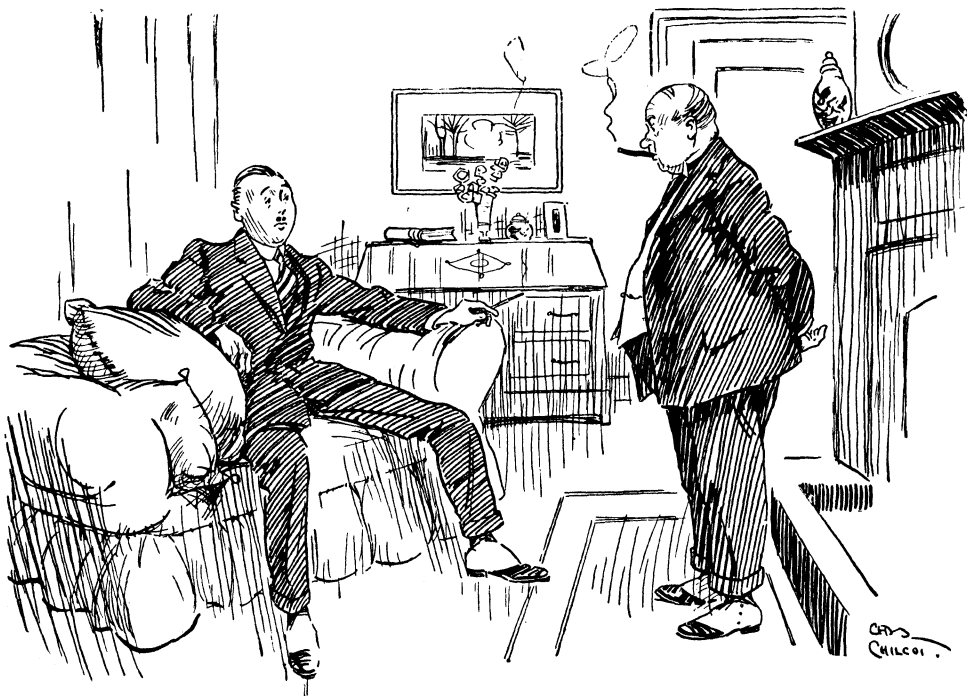
He dragged the bewildered Malecite into the room. Noel blinked stupidly at his wife and children. His wife sat up and spoke to him quickly in her own tongue. Noel's face lightened, and he eyed the Captain keenly—eyed the singed face, the raw and blistered hands, and the shirt peppered with round black holes. His black eyes met the Captain's blue ones.

"Been asleep," he said. "Head all go queer. T'ink me go shootin'. Feel a'mighty queer. One big fool, me!"

"Lie down, Noel," said the Captain gently. "Man, the pain has gone to your head. Nancy, he's shivering like a leaf. He needs a hot drink immediately. Then I'll dress his hand again."

The Malecite lay down on the floor with a sigh of relief and closed his eyes. "You make one good brother of Noel Bear," he said.





CHANGED TIMES.

PAPA: Why, when I was a young man, it was no uncommon thing for a youngster to start as a clerk, and in a few years own the business.

SON: Yes, I know, but that was before cash registers were invented.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

A LITERARY ADVISER.

By B. A. Clarke.

"SHALL we play skittles or for our coffees?"

"To-day for coffees."

A half-dozen chess amateurs who had meant to give the game an occasional glance over their newspapers laid these down and drew their chairs closer to the table, for when Zenner and Tarkle played for a stake, there was chess worth watching. Both were second-class players, and, as such, far better than the onlookers—far better, dear reader, than you are.

"Wait, I move an amendment," said Zenner. "I will produce a player who will give you the king's knight."

"For coffees?" asked Tarkle, with eyes agleam. He had not thought there was so much easy money in London.

(A cup of coffee and two games of chess were to him a sufficient lunch, and this was more by one game of chess than that dietetic expert, his employer, thought necessary for him.)

Zenner fetched a bulbous-headed man from near the door.

As the game proceeded, the stranger's head swelled. Wisps of hair that, meeting, had made a continuous line across his skull were now

separated by a broad path of complete baldness. He won a pawn ending.

"It was worth it," said Tarkle grandly, taking over his opponent's threepenny check.

It transpired that the victor was the champion of Mongolia, but no lover of conscripted labour. Simultaneous blindfold chess against all comers and at all hours for one rouble a day he deemed but a travesty of sound anarchical principles. His demand of an additional ten kopecks and a forty-hour week being refused, he had escaped, disguised as an Englishman, under the ingenious alias of Johnovitch Jones.

The *café* saw a lot of Mr. Jones in the weeks that followed. He drank gallons of coffee at the expense of players greatly inferior to Tarkle, and occasionally he varied his diet with a single reckless sandwich.

"I forget whether we are playing for sandwiches also."

This, of course, when he was not playing with Tarkle or Zenner.

Quite top-hole as a player, he had no rival as an annotator, and a chess magazine that he started survived.

And then came the Tartar-Mongolian Czecho-

Slovakian tournament, which kept Siberia and the Balkans in a ferment for weeks. Before leaving for it, Jones appointed Tarkle—to whom he had taken a liking—acting editor in his absence. For a time Tarkle's duties were confined to forwarding Jones's MSS. to the printer, and deleting the abuse with which the great player garnished his analyses of his rivals' games. But one morning he received a letter that worried him greatly. Midsummer was approaching, and Jones insisted that the season would be short of its proper note of warmth and gladness unless there were a double number of the chess magazine. His notion of a double number was a number for which a double price was charged; but Tarkle had lived long enough amongst us to realise that he could not get away with this. Additional matter being imperative, and it being a first principle with Jones that no one but himself could write upon chess, the only solution was a seasonable chess story. But where look for one? He laid the difficulty before Mr. Playfair, an *habitué* of the *café*, with whom he sometimes played skittles, and whom he could always beat so long as he restricted himself to pawn gains, the winning of a piece being invariably followed by Mr. Playfair's reconsidering his previous moves.

"How much are you willing to give?" asked Playfair.

"A pound."

"Good. I will write it myself, and let you have it to-morrow."

"Can you?"

"Of course. I am a journalist."

He edited *The Nail & Screw Review*, and had never written on any topic lighter than tin-tacks, but he was quite right. It is not in nature that there should be any subject carrying a fee upon which a professional journalist cannot write the requisite number of words.

Playfair delivered the story the following lunch-hour. He was pleased with it, and read Tarkle passages. When the magazine was going to press, Tarkle had one of those sudden panics to which editors are liable. His own mastery of English was imperfect. What guarantee had he that Playfair's story would not make the chess magazine a laughing-stock? The native nearest to hand was Tarkle's office boy, and

this expert condemned the story for its bad English. Tarkle threw it out and filled the gap with a seasonable article lifted from an old American magazine: "May Day on the Mason and Dixie Line."

Playfair turned purple when a hairy polyglot publicly returned his manuscript, remarking:

"Zee Engleesh, eet is not virtuous—what?"

Some weeks later, when the crowd one noon around the chess table was deeper than usual,



PLENTY OF TIME.

MISTRESS: Have you given the goldfish fresh water this morning, Lucy?

LUCY (newly engaged): Bless you, mum, they 'aven't drunk up wot's there yet!

Playfair appeared with a copy of "The Sandhurst All-Story Magazine."

"There, Mr. Tarkle, the greatest literary authority in the Empire has approved this story whose Engleesh, forsooth, was not sufficiently virtuous for your chess rag, and this is what I get in the place of your miserable pound."

He displayed a cheque for twelve guineas.

Tarkle turned white as the pieces he was handling.

Armed with "The Sandhurst," which he had borrowed from Playfair, he confronted his office boy.

"That story of Mr. Playfair's—you made me return it. Why, why, why?"

"The English warn't no good, sir."

"What was wicked with eet?"

"Well, sir, there was too many 'the's' und 'hands' for my likings."

"See it here, here, where all is better than Shakespeare, and they pay twelve guineas. By your *Dönnerrund-Blitzen* tomfoolishness you have lost Johnovitch Jones eleven pounds twelve shillings, the chance of acquiring a twelve-guinea article for one pound."

"Let's 'ave another look at the blooming story."

Tarkle hurled "The Sandhurst" at him. The office boy read the story slowly, trying to find something of the nature of an excuse. He had reached the last paragraph before he saw light.

"Har, I thought as much," he exclaimed triumphantly. "This isn't the story as I seen it. That blighter Playfair's been and cut out some of the 'the's' und 'hands.'"



In certain American railway stations the proprietors of the lunch counters have a custom of dating eggs for the reassurance of doubting customers. That is, they mark on the shell of a boiled egg the date on which it was laid.

A party arrived at one station shortly before midnight, and, following the habit of all American travellers, made at once for the lunch counter. They demanded eggs, and asked that they might be furnished with some of that day's laying.

"Sorry, sir," said the clerk, "to-day's eggs are all gone, but"—glancing at the clock, which pointed to quarter to twelve—"if you'd not mind the date, I could give you some of to-morrow's."



MILLIE was a very little girl and very polite. It was the first time she had been on a visit alone, and she had been carefully instructed how to behave.

"If they ask you to dine with them," she was told; "you must say: 'No, thank you; I have already dined.'"

It turned out just as her mother had anticipated, as her friend's father said; "Come, Mildred, you must take a bite with us."

"No, thank you," was the answer; "I have already bitten."



DURING a certain church conference one of the speakers saw fit to launch into a tirade against the universities, expressing gratification that he himself had never been corrupted by contact with a college.

When he had been talking for some time, the chairman interrupted with the question:



THE GREAT PRIZE.

GARDENER: I be glad to 'ear Master Walter's doing so well at cricket, sir.

FATHER OF WALTER: Doing well? What do you mean, Jennings?

GARDENER: 'E tells me as 'ow 'e got a duck in 'is school match yesterday.

"Do I understand that the gentleman is thankful for his ignorance?"

"Yes," was the answer, "if you wish to put it that way."

"Then," continued the chairman sweetly, "all I have to say is that you have much to be thankful for."



"I CAN'T think what Binks can see in that girl, and yet they say it was a case of love at first sight."

"Yes, but don't forget that he met her at a masked ball."



A PROOF OF PROGRESS

Ciro Pearls Ltd.

beg to announce the removal of their Head Establishment from 39, Old Bond Street, to 178, REGENT ST., W.

For some time past their showrooms at 39, Old Bond Street, have proved inadequate to cope with the ever-increasing demand for CIRO PEARLS, and they have been fortunate enough to secure one of the new buildings in the best position in Regent Street. There in future will be their chief showrooms.

The new establishment is most conveniently placed, almost equi-distant from Oxford Circus and Piccadilly Circus, surrounded by most of the leading West End fashion houses.

Beautiful in exterior design, the new *Ciro Pearl* building is even more beautiful within. In the chastely decorated and tastefully appointed salons—light, spacious and luxurious—

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Please note that 39, Old Bond Street, is now closed.

THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE.

UP THE RIVER.

Houseboats gay with flowers and bunting,
Cupid busy river-hunting,
Betty, dark and slim, at punting
Takes her turn.
With the pole she's not too clever,
But she brings her best endeavour
To impress recumbent Trevor
In the stern.

Though the pole her hands are gripping,
Yet it has a knack of slipping,
While the water will keep dripping
Down her sleeve.
"Sticking it" applause will get her,
So, with progress growing better,
Saturation does not fret her,
You'll believe.

FIRST GOSSIP: He's fairly in the soup.
SECOND GOSSIP: Always did make a hash of things.
FIRST GOSSIP: It's a rare old mix-up.
SECOND GOSSIP: Won't it cause a stir.



A FRIEND of a now famous painter tells a story of the time when the great artist was a poor student in Paris. He was then subject to fits of idleness that distressed the friends who knew what kind of work he could do if he chose. One of them remonstrated with him.

"Why don't you pitch in and paint something?" said the friend. "Pretty soon your money will be all gone, and those three rolls of canvas will still be standing there behind



CRITICISM NOT INVITED.

"Well, what do you think of it?"
"Umph! To tell you the truth, I——"
"If that's all, I don't want to hear another word!"

Till a free and graceful action
Sets a seal on her attraction,
Betty then, with satisfaction,
Turns to reap
Her reward of cordial praises,
But, instead of ardent gazes,
Finds that Trevor, snug and lazy's
Gone to sleep.

Jessie Pope.



"ONE of the most successful smallholders I ever knew," said Mr. Longbow, "was a retired conjurer. When his hens stopped laying, he turned them into rabbits."

the door, just as they've been standing for the last six weeks."

The artist, who lay on the bed, answered lazily:

"But, you see, as long as there's nothing on the canvas I can sell it."



A BEAUTY expert states that "the ears should not be placed higher than the eyebrows nor lower than the tip of the nose." Anyone about to order a new face should bear this in mind.

Shapely Ankles

Has Nature denied them to you? Then it need be but a temporary trial, for massage with

RODIOD

the wonderful fat-reducing cream, will quickly restore your figure to slenderness. Rodiod also cures, naturally and harmlessly, **double chins, fat wrists, and all over-tousness.**

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and so delightfully
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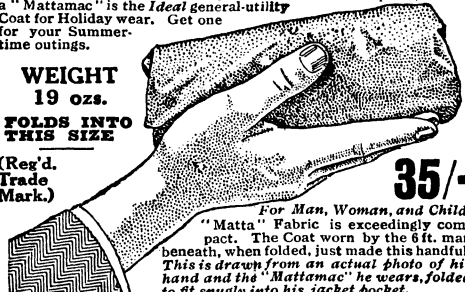
Feather Weight STORMPROOF

Don't risk disappointment with an imitation. Get the *genuine* which is labelled "Mattamac" beneath the coat-hanger.

A "Mattamac" is identical in appearance with the usual five-guinea Weatherproof. In utility, also, it equals its much-more-costly competitor. It wears as long, weighs one-third, and is absolutely Waterproof. Light and compact-folding, Wind, Chill, and Wet proof, a "Mattamac" is the *ideal* general-utility Coat for Holiday wear. Get one for your Summer-time outings.

WEIGHT 19 ozs.
FOLDS INTO THIS SIZE

(Reg'd. Trade Mark.)



35/-

For Man, Woman, and Child. "Matta" Fabric is exceedingly compact. The Coat worn by the 6 ft. man beneath, when folded, just made this handful. This is drawn from an actual photo of his hand and the "Mattamac" he wears, folded to fit snugly into his jacket pocket.

3 ozs. HEAVIER THAN AN UMBRELLA

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Belted Models (21½ oz.) 39/6

Colours: Fawn, Olive, Tan, Grey, Black, and Blue shades.

Belted "Mattamac" (21½ oz.) 39/6

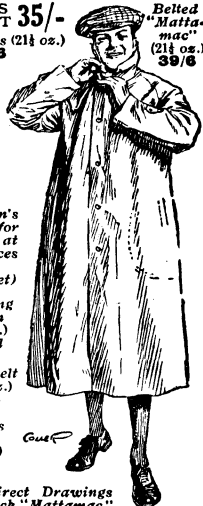
Lady (19 oz.) Un-belted Model 35/-



Children's Models for all ages at size prices (see Booklet)

Shorting Fawn (19 oz.) Model 35/-

With Belt (21½ oz.) 39/6 (For Ladies and Men.)



Illustrations are direct Drawings from photos of stock "Mattamac" Stormproofs; Belted Model (left) 39/6; unbelted (right) 35/-

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A MUSICAL DIALOGUE.

Scene—A Party. The hostess is trying to persuade a young person to perform on the piano.

HOSTESS: Do play us something, dear.

YOUNG PERSON: Oh, Mrs. Smith, I can't play a note really, you know.

YOUNG PERSON'S MOTHER: Yes, she can. Now, don't be silly, Clara. Go and play something at once.

YOUNG PERSON: But I haven't practised.

HOSTESS: Oh, do try, dear; we should all be delighted to hear you.

Guests make polite noises. Dialogue continues:—

"I don't know anything new."

"That doesn't matter; the old things are much nicer."

"I don't know anything very old."

"Where is your music?"

"I left it at home."

THERE is a waiter employed in a certain *café* who is one of the sort who sees "god in everything."

One hot afternoon in summer a customer entered this *café*, which is noted for its seafood, and ordered soft-shell crabs.

When they had been served, he said to the waiter:

"George, these soft crabs are very small."

"Yessir."

"They don't seem very fresh, either."

"Well, sir, then it's lucky they're small, sir, ain't it?"



WILLY: What is the difference between form and ceremony?

FATHER: Well, you sit on a form, but you stand on ceremony.



NOT THE CAMERA'S FAULT.

CLIENT: I don't think much o' this photo o' me, mate. I look like a bloomin' monkey.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Well, there you are—you should have thought of that before you came in.

"Well, look through this book and see if there are any pieces you know."

(Hostess produces a fat volume of "Airs of All Nations." Clara finds she can play them all, and proceeds to do so, and, after a forty minutes non-stop performance, has to be forcibly removed from the music-stool in the middle of the Mongolian National Anthem.)

R. H. Roberts.



1912

Scene—The outside of one of the side shows of a travelling circus.

SHOWMAN: This way, this way, to see the Bearded Lady!

Facing Third Cover.]

1923

Scene—The same.

SHOWMAN: Queen Beaver now on view!

A MAN has been discovered who can sing two notes at once. The great advantage about this gift is, of course, that he can get through a song in half the ordinary time.



"How is it that Jones, who works at a hair-restorer factory, is perfectly bald-headed?"

"Oh, that's all right; his job is to be photographed as the 'before using' man."



VISITOR (who has been sampling her hostess's celebrated home-made Genoa cake): What delicious bread-pudding, and how clever to think of putting almonds in it!

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WRIGHT'S COAL
TAR **SOAP**
The Nursery Soap-Protects from Infection



"GATHER A SHELL FROM THE STROWN BEACH
AND LISTEN AT ITS LIPS."—ROSSETTI.

By W. A. CUTHBERTSON.



"It was a nerve-racking process, but Jeanne persevered."

PEARLS OF PRICE

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

DOWN there in the Taumotus the sun is not to be trifled with. It pours out of the sky like molten brass, and where it falls unchecked sears the earth as with living flame. Not a blade of grass is to be seen in these atolls, and even the coral of which they are formed is bleached to a deathly pallor.

Yet here Monsieur Rénaud lived and thrived, for the lagoons of the Taumotus are natural storehouses of treasure unequalled in the world, and he had forced their locks.

Each morning, as the inevitable sun climbed from the sea, a black serpent put out from shore, leaving an ugly scar on the fair face of the lagoon. Presently it would break into a score of fragments, each resolving itself into a pearly canoe complete with naked diver and mate. And somewhere amongst them would be Monsieur Rénaud, hunched over the gunwale of his dugout, scouring the sea-floor through a water-glass. Never were eyes quicker than his to catch a glimpse of shell. That was why he made a point of directing his own fleet, and that also accounted for his

wealth. For those were the halcyon days of unrestricted diving, before a pettifogging Government stepped in to ordain that pearls should be the property of the diver—the property, if you please, of some brainless bronze giant who knew no more than to sell them to the highest bidder and drink himself to death on the proceeds. You should have heard Monsieur Rénaud on the subject!

But by the time the measure came into force he was beyond being affected by it. Apart from the substantial fortune he had derived from shell, and deposited in a Tahiti bank, there were his pearls. Each was perfect. It would not have been kept otherwise, and Monsieur Rénaud's chief amusement of an evening was to open the door of the safe where they lay in a bed of cotton-wool, and fondle them in much the same way that he fondled his adoring Parisian wife and little daughter Jeanne.

"So," he exclaimed one evening, while engaged in this pleasurable pastime, "so they would give you to the savage. They would indeed cast pearls before swine.

Sacrilege!" He swung to the door of the safe with a clang that caused Jeanne to come running to his knee, and Madame to look up from her needlework in alarm.

"It is nothing," he answered her anxious look. "Only that we shall shortly go to live in Paris." He explained the edict that had gone forth. "So, you see, there is nothing to keep us here longer."

Madame Rénaud regarded her husband with incredulous brown eyes. She had often heard him talk in this strain, but never with such tones of finality. Was it possible that he now meant what he had said so airily in the past, never dreaming of the torture he was inflicting—that Paris would be theirs in the near future, a small *hôtel* in the Rue Voullois, close to the shops and the Opera? Paris . . .

A flush came to Madame Rénaud's cheeks, and her hands trembled over her work as she listened to what her husband was telling Jeanne.

"But yes, little one, there are other places in the world than the Taumotus; others even than Papeete, where you may remember making yourself ill with ice-cream. Where we are going there are shops filled with wonders, and at night lit up like fairyland. And it is cool there, even cold sometimes, so that you must wear little furs, and bowl a hoop through the gardens to keep warm. A hoop? Ah, you will soon learn all about hoops."

"May *bébe* come, too?" inquired Jeanne. She was a serious child for her years, and already concerned over the possible fate of a pet turtle that lived in a neighbouring rock-pool.

"How could we leave *bébe*?" laughed Monsieur Rénaud non-committally, and, setting the child down, turned to his wife.

"And what has *maman* to say?" he suggested, rubbing his strong hands together in anticipation of her pleasure.

Madame Rénaud looked up, and smiled as she knew he would have her smile.

"You will miss many things," she ventured.

"So that is all?" Monsieur Rénaud relapsed with the air of a disappointed schoolboy, then leant forward so that his starched drills crackled under the strain. "I shall miss many things," he mocked. "The everlasting heat and glare, perhaps, or a strip of coral and a few tattered pandanus palms. Or, again, it may be the embarrassing variety of our fare—the grated cocoa-nut, the eternal fish!" His face took on

a look of tragedy that caused Madame Rénaud to laugh in spite of herself, and her husband to continue, elated at his success: "No, no, *ma chérie*, it is other things that I shall miss, and good riddance to them—the pallor of your cheek, the weariness in your eyes. We have enough. We will proceed to *live*."

"When?" said Madame Rénaud. It was the first time she had permitted herself to ask such a direct question on the subject.

Her husband leant back in his chair and studied the ceiling for a space.

"I will make one more trip with the fleet," he mused. "There is a corner of the lagoon, deep yet possible, which interests me. One last trip, then I will sell to the Compagnie Maritime, who have long wished to buy, and—a month," he ended abruptly, "in a month at latest. Will that leave time enough for you to prepare?"

"Ample," said Madame Rénaud, who would have cheerfully been ready in a day, but the tone failed to satisfy her husband.

"You are not pleased," he accused. "Is it possible that you do not wish to go?"

Madame Rénaud smiled wistfully at the impulsiveness of this husband of hers, usually so reserved, so deliberate. How could she tell him her heart had so often danced to the tune of that magic word "Paris," and been stilled by disappointment, that she now found herself incapable of displaying proper appreciation?

"It is not that," she said gently. "I was thinking——"

"Thinking?" boomed Monsieur Rénaud. "Of what should you be thinking but the hats that you will wear, and of how Jeanne will look on the boulevards?"

"I was thinking," persisted his wife, "that I would rather you did not make that last trip to the lagoon."

Monsieur Rénaud stared at her bemused. "I do not like 'last trips,'" she added gravely. Whereupon her husband laughed aloud, kissed her with the utmost tenderness, and turned his attention to other matters.

And the next day he directed the fleet as usual. He took it to a far corner of the lagoon, where his hawk-like eyes had detected shell at a greater depth than the divers had yet essayed. Standing up in his dug-out, he told the assembled company of brown-skinned men and women that these would be their last descents in his employ, that they had worked for him loyally, and that in return he proposed to give each

a present before he bade them farewell. He therefore hoped that to-day's would be a record showing of shell.

It was. Never had the raft, on which the immense pearl oysters were opened, been so laden, and never had the eyes of Monsieur Rénaud been so quick to detect a pause in the process of opening. It was as he thought: this shell, deep down, old and barnacle-encrusted, contained what all men sought in the Taumotus—occasional pearls of varying size, shape, and colour. Most of them were worthless, a few might pass muster, but one—there is always the chance of this one—a perfect product of the disease that gave it birth. Pink, pear-shaped, and with a peach-like bloom, it rested in the unworthy setting of Monsieur Rénaud's begrimed palm. His keen eyes devoured it, his fingers closed reverently upon it, as he crumpled down on the shell-strewn raft.

What had happened? He asked himself the question with growing impatience. There was a pearl in his hand. He could feel it, yet it had dissolved into a blood-red mist. His head ached. *Ciel*, how it ached! And the divers were about him shuffling, muttering. They were lifting him bodily into the dugout, and the dugout was moving—he could hear the splash of paddles, feel the blessed motion of air after the sweltering glare that had enveloped him throughout the day. But that was all. The rest was a red curtain rung down.

It was the same when they lifted him from the dugout, and he lurched up the beach like a drunken man. It was the same when he heard his wife's voice, and stumbled towards it. . . .

* * * * *

It was the same five years later, and would be to the end. An oculist had come from Papeete and said as much. As already pointed out, the sun of the Taumotus is not to be trifled with.

Monsieur Rénaud had suggested that the original plan of returning to Paris should be adhered to in spite of his affliction. They (his wife and Jeanne) should be his eyes. They would tell him just how things looked, the new hats of *maman*, Jeanne's play in the gardens. It would be great fun. He smiled as he said such things, a smile that would have deceived most people, but never his wife. To her he had always been a man transparent—that was why she had married him—and she knew that,

as things were, Paris would be little short of torture to him.

"I do not understand," he muttered, when the subject came under discussion. "It seemed to me before—before it happened, that you would have liked to go. I hope—"

"If you remember"—his wife's low voice came from behind the curtain—"I was not enthusiastic about it."

Monsieur Rénaud nodded reminiscently. "But it is strange," he mused, "strange that a woman should prefer the Taumotus to Paris."

"Perhaps I *am* strange," admitted Madame. "Hark! There are the canoes."

The sonorous hoot of a conch came over the water, and Monsieur Rénaud felt his way to the verandah—he hated being helped—and stood facing the lagoon.

"How many?" he asked eagerly.

"Forty," answered his wife.

His face brightened. "Ah, the Compagnie Maritime is growing! Forty, eh? But I'll wager they get no more shell than I used to with half that number. And no pearls, no pearls at all!" He chuckled and, dragging forward the cane chair, sat listening to the sounds he knew so well—the dry rattle of pandanus leaves, the eternal roar of the surf on the outer beach, the peckings and struttings of the minah birds. Often he smiled. And he would not smile like that in Paris, no. Madame Rénaud was convinced of it.

Then there came another and overwhelming reason for remaining on the atoll, nothing less than the failure of the bank in Tahiti. The letter explaining the tragedy—as connected in some subtle fashion with the bursting of the South Sea cotton bubble—interested Madame Rénaud not at all. What occupied most of her time and sapped her remaining strength was the struggle to make ends meet. While her husband sat smiling across the lagoon, or crooning over his pearls, it was hers to devise ways and means of saving him from anxiety and harbouring the slim resources that remained from the wreckage of his fortune. So the lean years dragged on.

"Jeanne," she at last told her daughter, now a *petite* sixteen-year-old edition of herself, "you will look after him?"

"Need you ask, *maman*?" cried Jeanne in an agony of apprehension. "But why do you speak like this?"

Her mother smiled and took her hand. "Listen, Jeanne. This is no country for

a white woman. Remember that. And get André to take you away from it as soon—as soon as it is possible. You understand?”

Jeanne blushed, but nodded obediently. She had no idea that her mother had noticed so much concerning André of the *Compagnie Maritime*.

“He is a good boy,” said Madame Rénaud, “and you are a fortunate child, but no more fortunate than your mother. Remember that also.”

Jeanne nodded again. She could not speak.

“Consider your father before all things,” continued Madame Rénaud. “He is

A faint sound came from the room beyond, and Jeanne moved swiftly to the bead curtain of the doorway, but there was no one there. Her father was standing at the verandah rail, smiling his serene smile across the lagoon. Already Jeanne felt the responsibility of her trust. Already it was part of her religion. He must never know—never.

So the gentle deception was handed on, for Madame Rénaud had spoken on a bed from which she never rose. But the difficulties of successful subterfuge increased with time. There was practically nothing left, yet still Monsieur Rénaud’s chief pastime consisted of playing with toys



“His hawk-like eyes had detected shell at a greater depth than the divers had yet essayed.”

easily managed. A great boy. You will keep from him the bank failure and anything that might upset him. You are old for your years. You will attend to these things.”

worth a young fortune. Jeanne would watch the changing expression of his face as he sat there at the table, arranging and rearranging his precious baubles to form a

necklace, a brooch, a pendant, while he related the history of each.

"Ah, here is the fellow that gave the

Jeanne told herself this with increasing insistence as time passed, and always the memory of her promise—"You will keep from him the bank failure and anything that might upset him"—rose up to give her pause. How was it possible to have recourse to their sole remaining means of support without betraying the situation? It was for Jeanne to find a way.

She would have told André of her trouble, but pride forbade. It was enough to have to go to him without a *dot*, and on the strict understanding that they should not leave the Taumotus as long as her father lived. André should not be imposed on further, she decided, though he appeared to like nothing better.

Often she would sit on the outer beach, hands clasped about knees, hair streaming in the wind, and ask counsel of the surf. It had always

been her good friend, and one day it made answer.

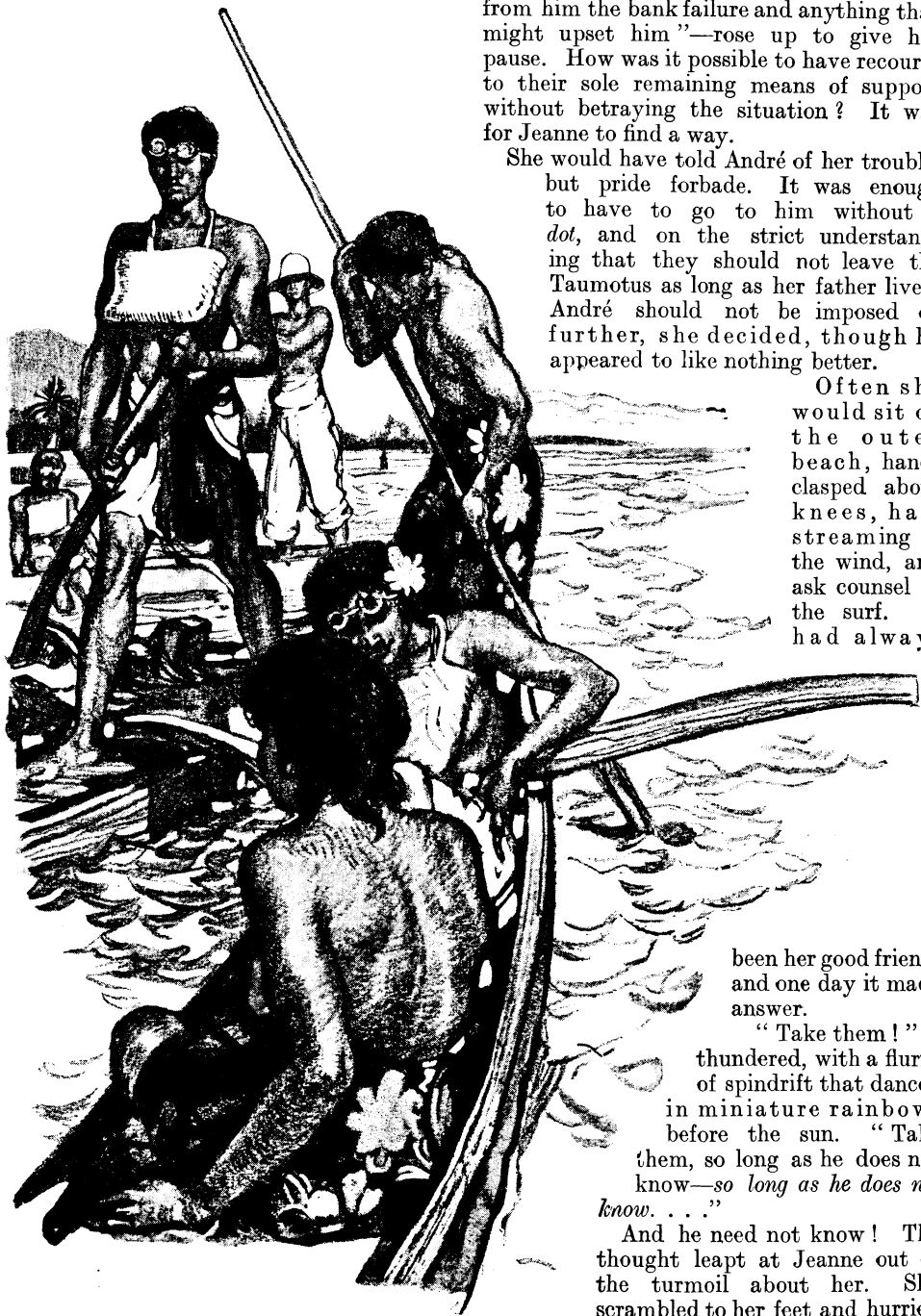
"Take them!" it thundered, with a flurry of spindrift that danced in miniature rainbows before the sun. "Take them, so long as he does not know—so long as he does not know. . . ."

And he need not know! The thought leapt at Jeanne out of the turmoil about her. She scrambled to her feet and hurried up the beach, never pausing until she stood before the counter of the local store.

"M'sieur Challier," said Jeanne, address-

trouble! But is he not worth it? See the lustre! See the perfection of form. . . ."

It was maddening. It could not go on.



ing a heavily-built man with bilious eyes, "I find it impossible to pay your bill for the month until the next mail from Tahiti."

"But it is nothing," protested Challier, leaning over the counter to feast his eyes on Jeanne's wind-whipped face. "If you allow such a trifle to disturb you for one instant, I shall be desolated."

"You are kind," said Jeanne, and ordered what she required.

She had turned to leave, when a thought seemed to strike her. "You deal in pearls?" she asked.

Challier flung wide his huge hands. "For what else am I in these pestiferous Islands, mam'selle?"

"Pipi pearls?"

He puckered his thick lips and blinked at the corrugated iron roof of the store.

"From you, mam'selle, yes, I would buy pipi, though, as you know, they are from other shell than the pearl oyster, and of little marketable value."

Jeanne puckered her lips also. Challier found it an adorable sight. "It may be curious," she mused, "but I like pipi best. They are so colourful. Some are like gold."

"Exactly," grinned Challier; "they are like anything but pearl."

"Yet, except for their colour, they are the same."

"True."

"By weight, touch, and test."

"Yes. It is only a matter of fashion. Who knows? Some day Paris may decree that pipi are *de rigueur*. Until then"—Challier shrugged his massive shoulders—"I fear I can offer you but little for your pipi, mam'selle."

"Fashion is stupid," said Jeanne.

"Stupid but inexorable," added Challier.

"So that I shall take advantage of it where I may," proceeded Jeanne, with a toss of her small head. "But you have misunderstood me. I have no pipi to sell. I wish to buy them, for a necklace." Challier's gaze became fixed. "Or, if you will, to exchange real pearls for them. Then I shall have the difference of their value in money and the kind of necklace that I like—in spite of it not being the fashion," Jeanne explained with charming *naïveté*. "Is that not so, M'sieur Challier?"

Challier did not attempt to deny it. Why should he? It was evident what this bewitching child intended to do—for he knew most things about the Rénauds—

and it seemed he at last stood a chance of securing some of the old man's well-known pearls.

Jeanne left with a selection of some fifty pipi, and that evening carried her plan into effect. It was necessary to sit very close to the table whereon Monsieur Rénaud played as usual with his toys, select one for comparison with its possible duplicate in pipi, and replace it the instant his hand moved in its direction. It was a nerve-racking process, but Jeanne persevered. And presently an unequalled opportunity occurred. Her father was engaged on a small but intricate design, and the remaining pearls lay discarded for some time. Jeanne took one, closed her eyes, and shook it together with a pipi in the hollow of her hands. But afterwards, between finger and thumb, she—even *she*—could tell the difference. It seemed hopeless.

Yet with practice she became more adept, and presently it seemed that the thing was done. She could detect no difference—no difference at all.

"Ah," sighed Monsieur Rénaud, "tell me, little Jeanne, how does that look?"

He had spoken while Jeanne's eyes were closed, while every nerve was centred in her finger-tips. The shock of his voice coming out of the black silence caused her to drop one of the pearls, and it was not the pipi. It fell with the faintest sound on the matting of the floor, but Monsieur Rénaud heard it.

"One has fallen!" he cried in alarm.

"No, no!" protested Jeanne to cover her confusion, and slipped the pipi amongst the rest.

"One has fallen," repeated Monsieur Rénaud. "Am I deaf as well as blind?"

It was seldom that he spoke thus. Nothing, it seemed, angered or pleased him now except his toys. Jeanne had come to hate the sight of them.

"Count them, father," she suggested gently, and watched his groping fingers with a kind of desperate resignation.

Here was the test. When he came to the intruding pipi, Jeanne's heart stood still. When it passed muster, and lay a glaring alien amongst the rest, a sudden weakness assailed her.

"There, what did I say?" she laughed nervously, and leant against the table for support.

Monsieur Rénaud made no answer as he consigned his treasures to the safe, but, turning, felt for his daughter's hand.

"Forgive me, Jeanne," he said. "I grow old. But, child, you are cold."

Jean took the pearl to Challier, who, after shaking his head over its various and imaginary defects, offered her a third of its value. She accepted. To her it seemed a stupendous sum, enough to pay expenses for months to come. That evening she hummed a song over her needlework, and went to meet André with lighter heart.

There was no reason why this harmless and highly successful method of supporting the household should not have been continued indefinitely. No reason, that is, except Challier. But he was not satisfied with it, and when Challier was not satisfied, others were soon made aware of the fact. He pointed out that one pearl was of little use to him. He would exchange, say, twenty more at the same generous figure, and make a consignment to Paris.

"But I do not wish to exchange twenty more," protested Jeanne.

"I understood it was a necklace of pipi that you had set your heart on," Challier leered at her across the counter. "One pipi hardly makes a necklace, mam'selle."

A sudden fear possessed Jeanne. What did he mean? How much did he know?

"When I wish to exchange more I will do so," she said evenly.

Challier inclined his head. "As you will. But unfortunately I cannot deal in that way."

"Then I will go elsewhere."

Jeanne had reached the door before Challier's voice again assailed her. "That, of course, is possible, but is it advisable?"

"Why not?" She turned and faced him squarely.

Challier made pretence of arranging his stock behind the counter. "You would hardly wish others to know," he suggested.

And suddenly it was borne in on Jeanne that he knew all. The revelation came with the force of a physical blow. But her voice was steady as she answered him: "I will consider the matter and let you know, Monsieur Challier."

"That is the wisest course, mam'selle. Believe me, it is not that I wish to persuade you against your will, but business is business even with so charming a customer as yourself. And when you come to consider this matter, I trust you will bear in mind that I am *paying* for your pearls—at present."

Which meant that by the simple threat of exposure he could force her to part with

them for nothing. It was so. His tone of ghastly benignity followed Jeanne into the glare outside and echoed in her ears as she walked blindly to the house and flung herself face downward on the bed. She had not known such things as Challier existed. He had said that this was "business." Did "business," then, transform all men into beasts of prey? Perhaps. Perhaps even André . . . She was alone—alone in a new-found world that filled her with disgust and alarm.

And after an infinity of trouble the additional pearls became Challier's. At the time it seemed to Jeanne the only course. At least she received payment for them, and she could not be sure of even that in the future. So Monsieur Rénaud's toys had become a motley collection, an offence to the eye and practically worthless. More than once it seemed to Jeanne that he fingered them with suspicion. Certainly he played with them less. Was he tiring of his pastime? She prayed that it was so.

But on a day some two weeks later all thought of past or future was swept from her mind by a happening in Challier's store. She had gone there at his request, dreading the interview, yet not daring to evade it.

"Is it that you demand the remaining pearls?" she asked him coldly.

"No," said Challier, smiling down at her. "It is that I have a mind to return all I possess in exchange for one—the rarest of Monsieur Rénaud's collection."

Jeanne's eyes met his in puzzled scrutiny. "You mean the one he brought back from his last trip?"

"I mean yourself, mam'selle."

For a moment Jeanne was surprised into a betrayal of her true feelings. Her gaze rested on Challier with an abhorrence that would have seared another man; then, as self-possession returned, a smile parted her white lips.

"I fear I must disappoint you, Monsieur Challier. I am betrothed."

"Betrothed!" he mocked. "Calf love! What is that beside my offer—a sufficiency, a good name, an end to all your anxieties?" He was beside her. "I want you, Jeanne. I have watched you from the time when you played as a child in the sand. I want you, and what I want I am in the habit of getting," he added in a harsh crescendo as she shrank before him. "I have made you an honourable offer. Think!"

Jeanne stood very white and still. "I thank you for your offer," she said in a low voice, "but I have thought. And if you must know what I think, I would kill myself before accepting it!"

Even Challier was impressed by the cold finality of the tone. He stood silent a space, then laughed softly. "So that is the way of it? You flatter me, mam'selle. And would you apply such drastic methods to your father?"

"You mean——"

"I mean that he is old, that there is no telling at his age and in his condition how he would take certain news that has been withheld from him overlong."

A low cry escaped Jeanne.

Her torturer stood nodding his head. "So you will, perhaps, think again, mam'selle. I trust you will think again. . . ."

Jeanne glanced to right and left like a wild thing at bay, then turned and fled into the sunshine across the strip of coral sand, through the narrow belt of palms, and so to the outer beach, where the surf thundered its welcome.

* * * *

Challier awaited Jeanne's decision longer than he was in the habit of waiting for anything, but it was not forthcoming. More than once he saw her moving about the Rénauds' bungalow, but neither by word nor look had she recognised his existence. The delay puzzled and angered him. Finally he called, fully expecting to be met at the door by a vanquished and amenable Jeanne, but the old man heard his footfall and hailed him into the living-room.

"Challier, I'll swear!" was his greeting.

"Correct," said Challier. "But how did you know?"

The old man wagged his head sagely. "I am not so helpless as some imagine. I carry my sight elsewhere than in my eyes, that is all."

"In your ears, perhaps."

"Yes, and in other places besides. But this is kind, Challier. I am alone. Pray be seated."

There was something uncanny in the old man's perception. Challier felt it as he sat there a trifle uneasily.

"I have come to make a request," he blurted suddenly.

Monsieur Rénaud bowed. "Name it," he invited.

"For the hand of your daughter Jeanne," said Challier. "You know me, m'sieur,

I can only say that I love her before all else. Have you any objection?"

Monsieur Rénaud leant back in his chair and crossed his thin legs. "But this is sad," he said. "You are late in the field, my dear Challier. Jeanne is already betrothed."

"To a mere infant without prospects," Challier interposed. "But you cannot take such an affair seriously."

"I?" Monsieur Rénaud lifted his shaggy eyebrows. "Alas, I am not in a position to control such a matter. It is in Jeanne's hands, and I believe she takes it in all seriousness."

Challier shifted his position with impatient abruptness. "And I am convinced that I can persuade her to take it otherwise," he said shortly. "Have I your permission to do so?"

Monsieur Rénaud smiled and swung his slippered foot back and forth. "Permission?" he repeated. "Times have changed, Challier. It is for Jeanne to decide."

"Very well, then," snapped Challier, and rose to go.

"But wait," interposed Monsieur Rénaud. "It is only right that one interested in my Jeanne should know the extent of her *dot*."

"It does not concern me," said Challier.

"No?" Monsieur Rénaud swung open the door of the safe and exposed to view an atrocious collection of multi-coloured pipi. "As an expert, do these not interest you, Challier?" The old man placed a finger to his nose and spoke in an absurd whisper. "They will be Jeanne's, all Jeanne's. Note the lustre, the delicacy of colouring! He will be a wealthy man, the husband of my Jeanne."

"They are indeed magnificent," exclaimed Challier, at a loss for other words, and as though they had been a signal, Monsieur Rénaud swung to the door of the safe and crumpled into his chair.

He seemed on the instant to have shrunk into one incredibly old. The lines of his face had deepened. His unseeing eyes stared with terrible fixity at the opposite wall. He was thinking as only the blind can think, piecing together sounds and sensations of the past to form a mental picture of happenings he had never seen. A vague alarm seized on Challier. He was moving noiselessly towards the door when the old man's voice broke the silence, low, deliberate, strangely compelling.

"Not yet, Challier. You must not go

yet. You are either kind, or—— Let me think. Sit down."

Challier obeyed in spite of himself. "I fail to understand," he said, with feigned unconcern.

"You fail to understand," repeated Monsieur Rénaud grimly, "but that is perhaps natural. Let me explain by asking a question. How came you to be so glib a deceiver? Out of consideration for me?"

"Deceiver?"

"Yes, for you must have seen as clearly with your eyes as I with the senses remaining to me that those are not pearls as you and I understand them."

"Then you know?" The words were wrung from Challier in an involuntary undertone.

"Know? From the first I have known," declared Monsieur Rénaud. "Do you think such trash as lies in that safe would pass muster with me?"

"Then why do you allow the deception to continue?"

"That is a family matter." Monsieur Rénaud smiled reminiscently. "Still, so that you may follow my reasoning, and perhaps help me to a conclusion, you had better hear it. I allow the deception to continue because of a promise exacted from Jeanne many years ago—a death-bed promise that I chanced to overhear. I do not like such things. They are too uncompromising for the young, but there, it was made. I was never to know of the bank failure—you will remember it—never! It was, and is, Jeanne's life to keep that from me. And she will have broken her promise if I let her know that I have detected the substitution of trash for my beloved pearls. For that is what she has been driven to, Challier, to keep us alive. And how can she account for doing such a thing except by admitting that we are penniless? I tell you, we who are blind have time to think. So I continue to play with my pearls, though it is hard work sometimes, hard work."

Monsieur Rénaud paused, then leant forward with startling suddenness.

"And less than two weeks after that first substitution twenty more took place. Twenty at one fell swoop! Then I knew there must be something radically amiss. She had sold the first one to keep us alive. Where had the money gone in that short time to necessitate the sale of twenty more? It costs little to keep us alive, Challier. Someone was either taking advantage of her

innocence and buying at a grotesque figure, or had tasted blood, and was bringing undue influence to bear on the child to secure more. In the one case he is a robber. In the other he is something worse."

Monsieur Rénaud smote the table.

"I am looking for that man, Challier!"

Challier moistened his lips. Not for the first time during this strange interview he was aware that there was something uncanny about it. The absolute logic of the old man's deductions—not to mention their accuracy—made it appear that he was gifted with second sight. Challier fought against the notion, but it survived.

"And what will you do when you find him?" he suggested ironically.

Monsieur Rénaud raised his clenched fist, then lowered it.

"Nothing," he said. "There is no need. I should like to know who the man is that will be dogged to his grave by every manner of ill-fortune, that is all."

"And why should that befall him?"

"You have no superstition?"

"None."

"You are to be envied. Most of us have, though some will not admit it. Frankly, Challier, I am sorry for this fellow. He does not know, he cannot know, what lies in store for him who takes advantage of the blind."

Challier stiffened in his chair. It was a well-known axiom in the Islands, and he had never thought of it. Bah! What childish absurdity! He rose and moved towards the door. The old man lay crumpled in his chair, staring, staring at nothing, yet there was not a doubt that in his own fashion he saw. . . .

"*Au revoir*, Monsieur Rénaud," Challier called back at him. "I wish you luck in your search."

But Monsieur Rénaud's search was ended. He had found his man.

What went on in Challier's store for the next week no one knew, for it was shut. But the Taumotus are a curious place, and superstition thrives there. Moreover, it is difficult to avoid signs and portents when living alone on an atoll infested by them, and still more difficult when one's only company is the bottle.

When the authorities forced an entrance, they found a trembling wreck of a man, who could do no more than thrust into their hands a small square package containing pearls, and gibber about the eyes of Monsieur Rénaud.

TACTICS AND METHODS IN LAWN TENNIS AND THE QUESTION OF SURFACES

By F. GORDON LOWE

Photographs by Sport & General

I. TACTICS.

A DEFINITION of "tactics" would seem to me to mean the finding of, and the developing, a suitable game against a particular opponent. Tactics and headwork are to all intents and purposes the same thing. No matter how well you play your strokes, if your tactics are faulty, you will lose your match.

There are so many errors that may be committed. To advance to the net on a bad-length drive, or, again, to refrain from following a well-placed drive to the net, losing thereby all the advantage one has already gained, these are two fatal mistakes. I have seen men continually playing on to a man's strength, without a thought of finding out his weaknesses.

When one speaks of a man's tactics as having been good in a particular match, one means that he has been able to play the very best game possible under the circumstances. At Copenhagen, a short time ago, I saw Lycett very nearly lose a five-set match against Petersen, the Dane. It was a match consisting of long base-line exchanges. I realised that when it came to my turn to play Petersen, I must employ different tactics. Volley him I could not. He would have passed me. So I just went out to break up his driving game as much as possible by mixing my drives all I knew how, sometimes playing short, then a good-length shot, and so on. My tactics stood me in good stead, as I had him running up and down the court instead of from side to side, and I won in three straight sets. Mixing one's game is very important. I

saw Beamish once, at Beckenham, completely put Shimidzu off by mixing his game.

Never make the fatal mistake of driving hard against a base-liner. If you do, you merely create speed for him. A slow good-length return is more difficult to drive than a fast one.

I suppose in our day there has never been a greater tactician than Roper Barrett. His strokes are not wonderful, but his knowledge of court craft has always been a sheer joy to the beholders, who see him gently place the ball in just *the* place on the court where it was least expected.

A great knowledge of tactics was displayed by Wilding when he met McLoughlin at Wimbledon in 1913. Wilding elected to stand right in to take the terrific service of the American, therefore his return was delivered very much quicker, and caught McLoughlin time and time again at his feet as he came in to volley. The American was essentially a volleyer, as his ground stroke equipment was not his strong point.

To stop a man playing his favourite game, your tactics must be good. Remember that a persistent volleyer's ground strokes are never on a par with his volleying ability. Therefore against him it is necessary to hit hard and keep a good length. If you can only manage to keep him back by good-length driving and come to the net yourself, your opponent will be in difficulties the whole match through. Whenever, in the old days, I was lucky enough to beat C. P. Dixon, it was always by employing this method.

On the other hand, when you are up

against persistent base-liners such as Ritchie used to be, or Slemm is to-day, it is hardly any use—unless you are of the super-class, like Tilden—to attempt to outclass them by trying to drive them off the court. Your only hope is to lure them to the net to their own undoing. Good-length balls thrive on, and the more difficult the angle, the better return they will make off it. If you yourself are an exponent of the base-line game, you are probably none too good a volleyer, so your best tactics lie in inducing your opponent to come up. This must be judiciously done by mixing your game. A good drop shot is an excellent shot and a very hard one to deal with, and it has always seemed to me surprising that more players do not attain to a greater proficiency in this stroke. Miss Ryan and F. M. B. Fisher are both excellent exponents of it, so is Wallace Johnson of America. The proper reply to a drop shot is another drop in return.

The way to beat a good forehand driver who possesses very little else is *not* to make for his backhand corner at once, as nine players out of ten would do. He is used to this procedure, and waits for it. Then he runs round your return and makes a brilliant drive off it. Now, far the best way is to play right out into his forehand corner, where lies his strength. You play on to that until he is well out of position, and then you whip your next return in to his backhand. He has no time now to run round this, as he would have done had the attack been made directly on to his weakness. He is bound, therefore, to give you a return of which you should be able to take full advantage and volley it as you wish.

Disguising one's game is another form of good tactics. Try never to let your opponent realise which shot you are going to play. Many players are so very obvious in this respect. Employ every sort of stroke. The cut, the top, the slice, the clear-hit stroke, all have their uses, and the more varied your game, the more likely you will be to beat your man.

Tilden can use all these different shots when required. Some players make the fatal mistake of always passing the man at the net with the same passing shot. This

is a grave error in tactics, for he learns to anticipate it, and therefore what would be a good shot, if judiciously used, ceases to be efficacious.

Tactics in a three-set match should be different from those you should go for in a five-set struggle. I have never looked on the loss of a set in a five-set match as a very serious affair. In a three-set match it is,

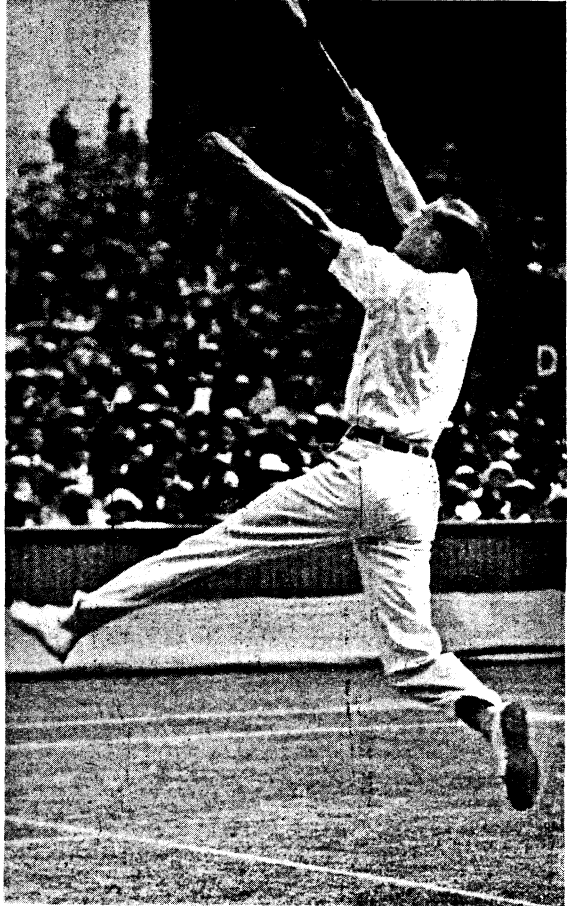


Photo by)

W. T. TILDEN.

[Topical.

of course, quite a different matter. You have got to go full steam ahead. There is no question of husbanding your resources. As in the quarter mile, you have to go all out.

In a five-set contest it is often sound policy to throw away a set. For example, supposing your opponent has gained a substantial lead, and you are in the position of standing two games to his five, or even 1—5, let the set go, at the same time making

him work as hard for it as possible with as little individual effort on your side as you can manage. Then, naturally, go for the next, and also the other sets with a rush. Against Kingscote, at Monte Carlo, two years ago, I adopted these tactics. I won the first set in a five-set match after a struggle. I started slackly in the next set, and after Kingscote had led me three love, I deliberately threw it away. It had the effect I had hoped for. For seemingly it lulled Kingscote into a false sense of security, and when I "came again" in the next set, the



MAJOR A. R. F. KINGSCOTE.

slow pace of the preceding one seemed to have thrown Kingscote out of his stride, and I won fairly comfortably in the end. My tactics, therefore, were justified, for my contention is this: had I not lost that set so easily I should not have won my match so easily.

I have always looked on it as good policy in a five-set match to think it out for myself beforehand, and to get a good general idea of the methods I intend to employ, and as far as possible to stick to them. It is the greatest mistake in the world ever to play a first set tentatively. Go all out to acquire

your length, touch, and direction from the start. Acquiring them may cost you a few games, or even a set. Never mind, for it prevents you playing the poky game you are likely to develop if you begin using "safety first" methods as a start.

Then it may possibly happen that you expect from the start to lose the first two sets. This was the case with Wilding when he met Beals Wright at Wimbledon in 1910. The American was a brilliant volleyer, with the knowledge that if he were to win against a man as physically fit as Wilding, his only chance was to try to win in three straight sets. A volleying game takes a great deal out of a man, and he knew he could not last more than the three sets. Now, Wilding knew that if he could only secure one of those sets, all would be well. He could rely on his marvellous fitness to do the rest. As it happened, Beals Wright took the first two sets, and Wilding got away with the last three easily.

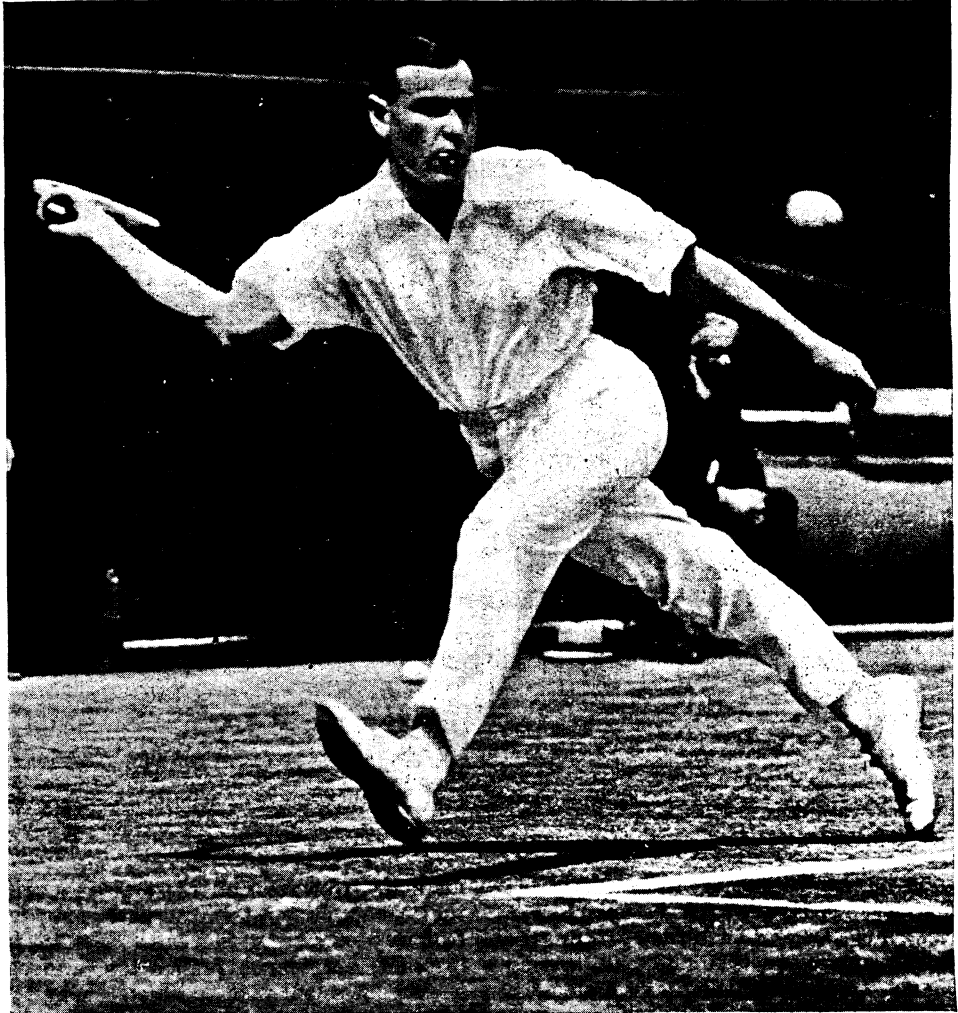
Another great point to be remembered in tactics is this: even if you yourself realise that you will probably be beaten, never let your opponent get wise to this fact. Play with determination up to the end. Don't let your game develop into one of a purely defensive type. If certain methods are not meeting with the success you had hoped for, try to hit on something else which is likely to worry your opponent more. To keep on playing the same game is only likely to give more and more confidence to your opponent. It is always best, of course, to tackle your man from the start,

but *after*—as I have said before—you have acquired your length, touch, and direction. A good lead means a great deal, and there are certain players who directly they get their tails down play a very different class of game. But it takes some doing to discourage a really great player, for a man like that is never so dangerous as when he has got his back up against the wall. For example, take the final of the National Singles of America. Johnson was leading Tilden 2 sets to 1, and three love in the fourth set, and yet Tilden won. Some determination, that!

Although the odds are very much in favour of the server in the modern game, and the loss of a service game in a set very often decides the issue of that set, I am of opinion that it is better tactics very often, when winning the toss, to take side rather than service, and my reason is this: at the

why I rarely choose "service" if the decision rests with me.

Another form of tactics I have found stand me in good stead is playing to one particular side of the court. Of course, one has to be a "class" player to put this into force, but I believe it is a very paying thing



G. L. PATTERSON.

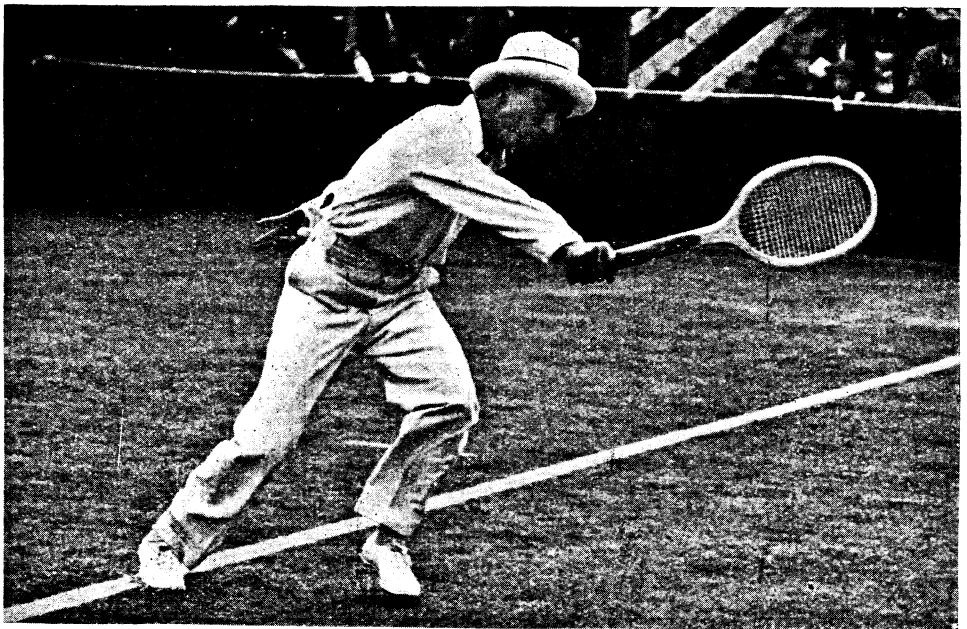
commencement of a match the server is probably a bit stiff, and he is more likely to get his service operating easily in the second game. Therefore one can, by taking the side when winning the toss, snatch at an advantage which is not likely to occur again. I have noticed that players often drop that first service when it is the first game of a match, and that is the reason

to do. What I mean is this: whatever sort of return you receive, or whatever kind of stroke comes your way, go on placing it back to your opponent's forehand. If you can only hold out, it is bound to pay you. Then when you have reached, say 4 all, suddenly whip round your game to the other side of the court. Your opponent will have had no play at all on his backhand,

and you may consequently find him very ill prepared and stiff for the unexpected change, and the set will very likely come your way. Then tackle his forehand again, playing to his backhand only in an emergency. I have always believed in this particular form of tactics, and on a few occasions, notably in the final of the London grass court championship at Queen's one year, against P. M. Davson, and against the Australian player Horace Rice, in the Australasian Championship, I have tried this method and it paid me.

Be content to win your service and lose your opponent's until you reach 4 all, and in

with the average player is that his game is not varied enough. Tilden is one of the few players who is able to change his methods to meet any conceivable situation. Most players win or lose by the same method. Sleem, Shimidzu, Fyzee, Ritchie and myself are fundamentally base-liners. Brookes, Patterson, Cochet, and McLoughlin are essentially volleyers. We either win by our own method or not at all. Norton, Johnson, Anderson, Kingscote, Alonso, Tilden, are all-court players—that is to say, they are equally at home on the base-line, at the net, or anywhere on the court, for that matter. Theirs is, I am confident, the ideal



Z. SHIMIDZU.

a volleying campaign, just as in a base-line game, continuously try to pass your opponent at the same spot. He will then get into the habit of running to this side and leaving a big gap on his other wing. At 4 all, take your chance and wipe your passing shot to the opposite side, and you are likely to win his service pretty comfortably. With a 5-4 lead and your own service to follow, you should take the set. Of course in a way this is all supposition, but there is a good deal to be said for these tactics.

II. METHODS.

ALL players have their own particular methods and strokes which they prefer to employ during their matches. The trouble

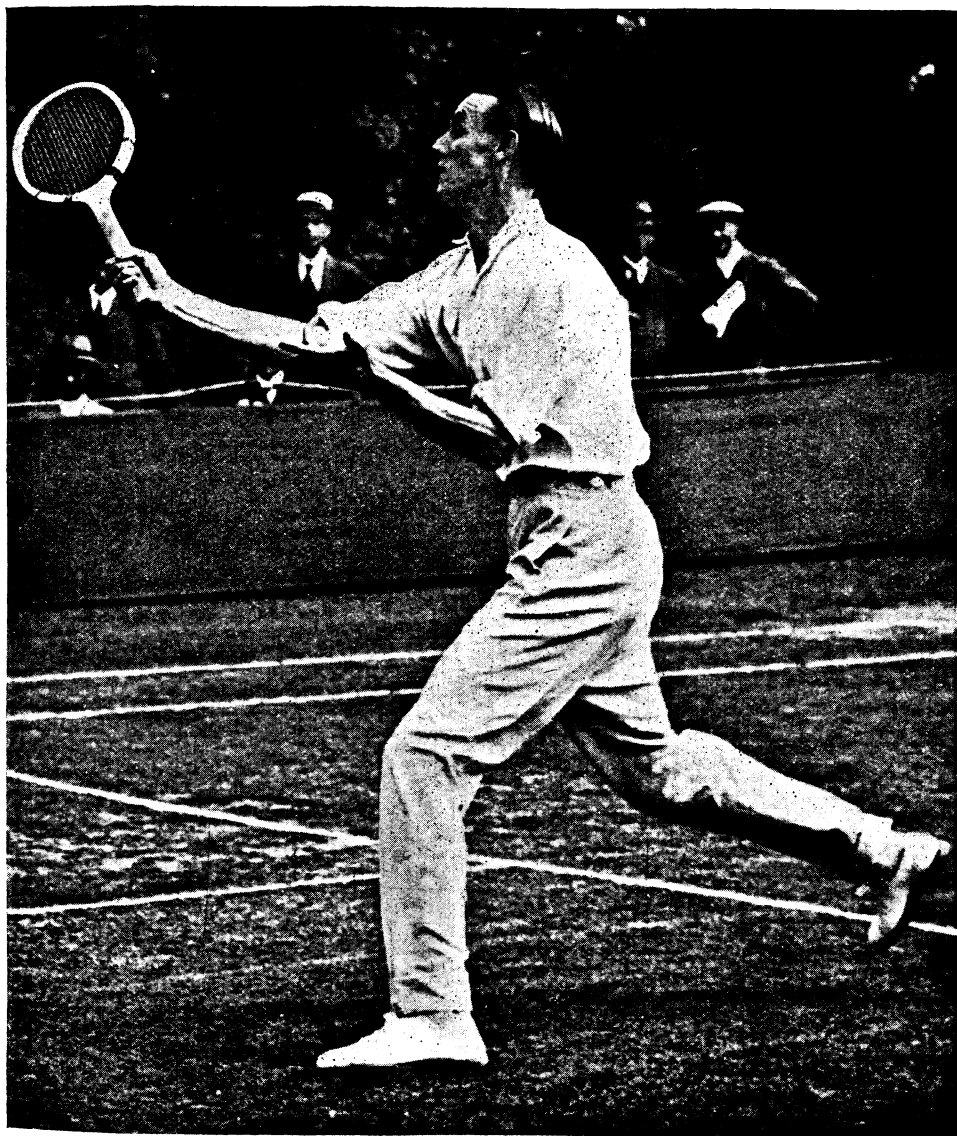
method. However, all these players, with the exception of Tilden, have only one real way of hitting the ball. Norton, for instance, very much prefers top, although he can cut a ball with the best. Kingscote employs a sort of half slice half cut, and so on. It is curious to note the different effect that the various types of game produce on different players. One man may find a certain player most difficult to beat who presents no sort of terror to another.

The Base-Line Game.—A glance at the play in any English tournament will show you what a hold the base-line game has on both the men and women singles players of to-day. Nine out of ten singles are played from the back of the court, and this should not be the

case when all the prominent teachers of the game are advocating continuous attack as the only possible method.

I think the majority go for this class of game because it is an easier method by

task to lure him up to the net. He is very quick and fit, and is capable of returning anything from any angle—in fact, the more difficult the angle, the better his return. He works out his games as a man



J. O. ANDERSON.

which to win the ordinary English tournament, and also because it takes less out of you than the other type of game. The base-line game is the one at which you can excel for a greater number of years. Sleem is, I consider, one of the best base-liners in the world, and it is an almost impossible

plays a game of chess. It is very seldom that he makes a winning shot, but he makes the other man miss his. It is a slow process, of course, and should his opponent also be a base-liner, he will go on returning the ball always a good bit slower than his opponent, who in the end will drive out or into the

net, or, in sheer desperation, come up only to be neatly passed.

Even Norton, at Eastbourne in 1921, was reduced to playing Sleem, in the early part of the match, from the base-line, and although many critics thought this procedure was not necessary, I rather think it was. Norton was not sufficiently above Sleem in class to carry him off his feet by a continuous volleying attack, and had to play him at his own game, with a little volleying thrown in.

Now, at Queen's Club, in the covered

spectator's point of view, it would have been the right one to play. Later on, against me at Roehampton, he adopted these tactics and won.

It is not always the most brilliant tennis that will win, and it is this fact which has made the base-line game so popular in England, because it will generally win against anything that does not happen to be of that super-class on which I will touch later on. Ritchie's record ten years before the War was as good as that of any player going. The average he kept up was excellent,



B. I. C. NORTON.

court meeting a year ago, Norton tried to overwhelm me by a volleying attack, but all he did was to give me a target for my drives and to bring out my best game. I got within a point of a three straight set victory when I had to retire, as next day I was off to Spain for the England *v.* Spain match. Everyone said that the match was a spectacular one. But the point I want to set forth is this: had Norton conducted his game from the base-line, and kept up a slow stream of good-length drives, and after he had made an opening, then advanced to the net for a kill, although tedious from the

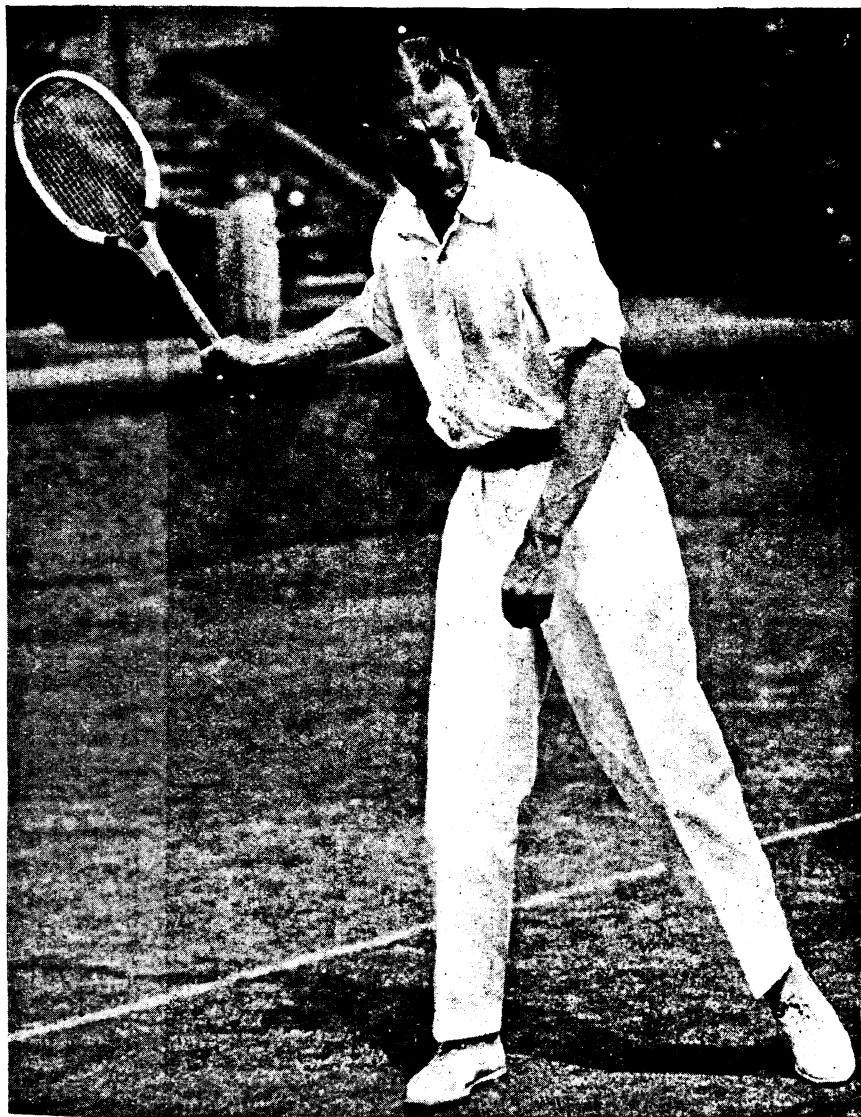
and he may be well described as the greatest base-liner of his day; but, base-liner as he has always been, in his greatest matches he has always volleyed, and, indeed, no really great performance can be accomplished without it. When he beat H. L. Doherty at Queen's he was at the net nearly the whole time.

I have heard it said that the perfect base-line game will beat the best volleying game that ever was seen, for this reason: the volleyer, at the net, has the court behind him. Dead straight shooting from the base-line would find that unoccupied area;

there is always a loophole to be found in a volleyer's armament. Of course, should the volleyer be a class better than the base-liner, this will not apply; but if they are both of the same class, my contention is the base-liner will win. The percentage

them. What he does not like is a continued cut shot, because it is hard to drive, owing to its low bound and spin.

The most difficult shot to manipulate from the base is a slow centre shot, commonly known as the "centre theory," which



F. GORDON LOWE.

of errors committed by the volleyer will outweigh those of the base-liner, who, if he is worthy of the name, can conduct his passing shots on to any spot that he fancies, and lob also with the most wonderful accuracy. He thrives on angles. The more difficult they are, the more he delights in

pitching somewhere near the centre of the base-line. It is very hard to make an effective stroke off this particular return, as it gives no opportunity for angles, more especially if your opponent is coming to the net. Doubt is particularly good at this type of game. I used, in the old days,

to find him a very hard man to beat in a three-set match, and before the War I looked on him as my *bête noir* in the tournaments in which we met.

I shall call Shimidzu a base-liner, though, in a very unorthodox way, he can volley

drive, and there are many other lesser lights.

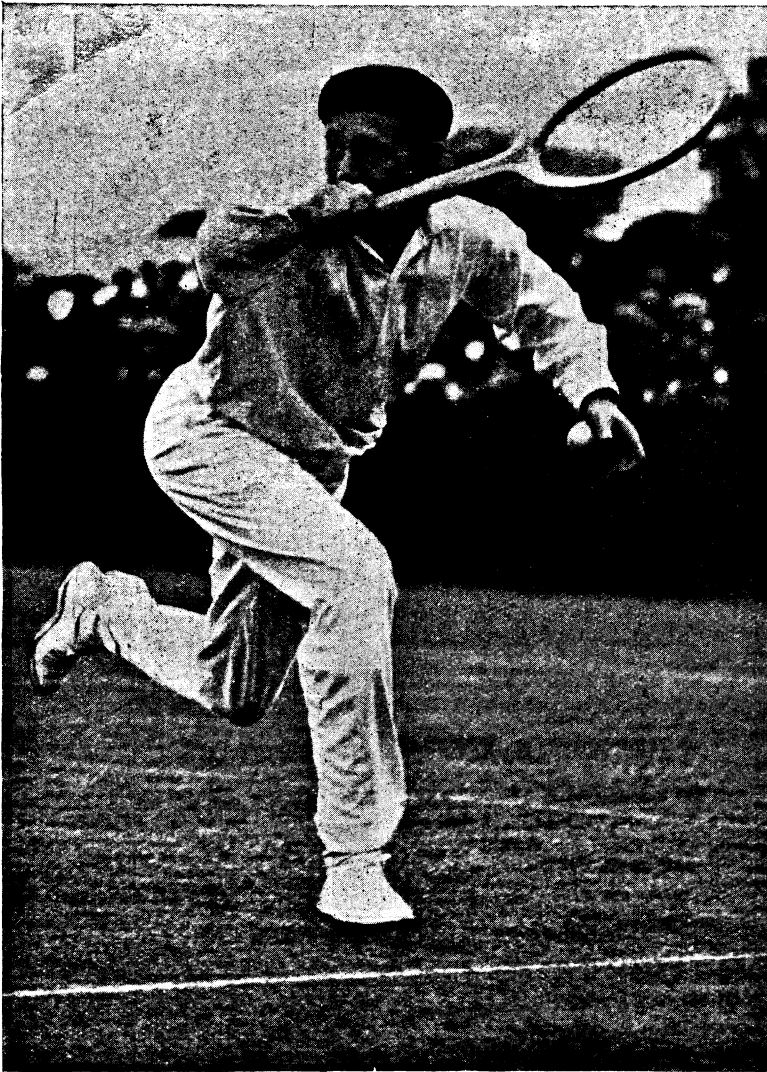
What I am afraid I have had to thank for making me more of a base-liner than anything else was the fact that handicap singles had the most enormous attraction for me.

I loved wading through them at, say, owe 30 or 40, and I won quite a good few. I was not such a confirmed base-liner in my Cambridge days, nor am I now, I fancy. I hope that I have developed a more varied type of game. But those handicap singles gave me great pleasure.

In owing and giving long odds steadiness and accuracy are required, and the patience to fight one's way gradually through the big handicap. I rather got into the habit of playing this type of game in matches, partly, I suppose, because I found it paid. Before the War, while playing Cowdray—the professional at Queen's, at that time one of the best professionals in the world—I found to my great delight I was holding him and even beating him at this stonewalling type

of game. I rather drifted into a base-line game, which, after all, has not done me so very badly in a long career in various parts of the world.

Three things are absolutely necessary in base-line play—accuracy of return, patience, and good passing shots. I think that the very worst experience I had of base-line

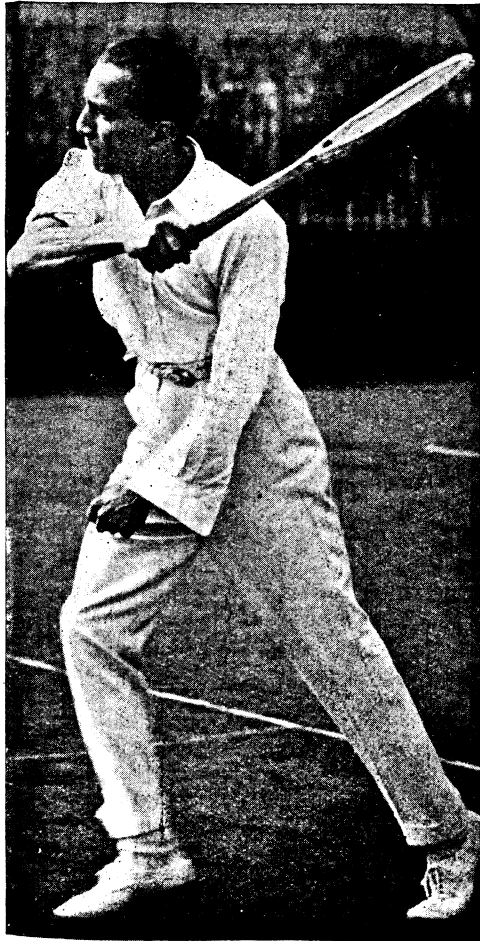


J. BOROTRA.

and smash. His first year at Wimbledon, in 1920, he did very little of either, and yet he ran Tilden close. But where he differs fundamentally from most base-liners is that when he *gets* his opening, he can hit fast and true into it, and finish the rally. A. A. Fysee is a good base-liner, whose great asset is his punishing forehand

play was when I played Zerlandi, the Greek, at the Olympic games at Antwerp in 1920. The match, fortunately for both of us, was played in three sections, but, all told, it lasted five and three-quarter hours. Neither of us could outdrive the other on that occasion, nor volley, as for either of us to essay the net was to court a pass disaster. On and on went those endless returns from the base-line. Luckily I eventually struggled home at 6—4 in the final set—more reminiscent of the finish of a Marathon race than of that of a lawn tennis match.

The Volleying Game.—It was in 1912 that the Americans, in the person of Maurice McLoughlin, introduced the volleying game pure and simple, and, for the time being, it was good enough to win through. McLoughlin possessed a curious equipment of strokes. His ground shots were very indifferent, his backhand poor. He possessed a good,



A. A. FYZEE.

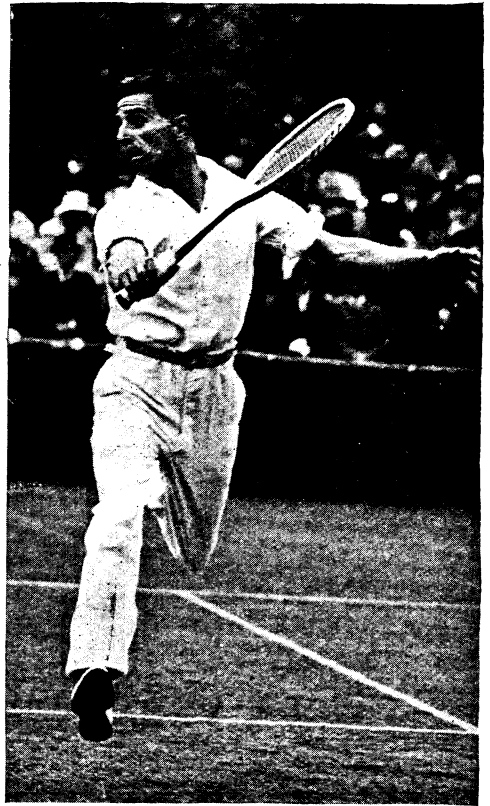


Photo by]

MANUEL ALONSO.

[Alfieri.

though erratic, forehand, but his service was brilliant. The second delivery was as hard as the first, and he could call upon several variations of it. This powerful service made volleying comparatively simple.

The player of that day was unused to returning such deliveries, and consequently the most they were able to produce was a soft return, of which McLoughlin made short shrift. In addition to this great asset of service, he could smash a ball from any angle or from any position in the court. He was a master-hand at this stroke, and, indeed, I have never seen a finer exponent of the smash. It was the hurricane method that he employed that used to carry him through his matches, but those tactics would not be enough to do so to-day. Even in 1913 McLoughlin found out, to his cost, that his volleying methods were useless when pitted against the perfectly conceived and planned "all-court" game of Wilding.

Brookes came up against the same kind of thing when he met Parke in that

marvellous match which was played for the Davis Cup at Melbourne in 1912. What a brilliant display of ground work it was! A match one will never forget. Again the volleyer found his methods failing him when up against this different kind of game.

Patterson was playing the same game when he won at Wimbledon last year. His devastating service, forcing an easy return on to his racket, was the great secret of his success in the championships of 1922, but during his subsequent trip to America, in the ultra-modern game as demonstrated by Tilden and Johnston, his service alone, magnificent as it is, was not sufficient against men so superlatively equipped in all other departments of the game.

Borotra is another who relies entirely on his volleying. Certainly it takes him a long way, especially on a hard court. His wonderful power of anticipation, and the way he has of getting his racket on to the ball, is nothing short of marvellous. Fine athlete, too, that he is, his quickness on the court is a most powerful asset. He is up at the net in a flash, and has a summary way of dealing with almost any return. It is his cut ground stroke that is inclined, I think, to let him down, more especially on grass.

Norman Brookes is undoubtedly the greatest volleyer that has ever been, and certainly the most successful one. The great left-hander possesses very sound ground strokes, notably a forehand drive taken when the ball is at the top of the rise. But the lesson to be derived even from the super-volleying game is this: it will undoubtedly succeed against any class of game except the all-court game as demonstrated by Tilden and Johnston and one or two others.

The All-Court Game.—Now I come to the type of game that is undoubtedly the most successful of all. I refer to the "all-court" game, of which Tilden is, without any gainsaying, the outstanding genius. No stroke comes amiss to him, for the reason that wherever he happens or chooses to be in the court, he is equally happy in dealing with a shot.

Johnston, Vincent Richards, Alonso, Williams, Cochet, Norton, Lycett, Kingscote, and Gobert all can tackle a volley with as fine a precision as they can a ground shot. They are the leaders of the "all-court" game, the most efficient, and it is these men we have to look to, to copy, if we ever want to go ahead as an important lawn

tennis playing nation. I maintain that even the most confirmed base-liner—with, perhaps, the exception of Sleem—has broken away from his own particular method and employed, to some extent, the "all-court" game at those times when his greatest successes have been achieved. The basis of the "all-court" game is the base line.

I noticed, when watching the play of Tilden, Johnston, Johnson and Vincent Richards, in the National Singles Championship of America in 1921, how much of their work was carried on from the base-line. All these men were quickness itself to seize any opportunity that occurred, as the result of their good shots at the back of the court, to come in to the net for a kill. Wilding played his matches in a very similar way, but he was not quite so quick or so versatile as the modern American players. Should Tilden or Johnston find their method of tackling a match unsuccessful, they start in with an entirely new one. From base-line methods they turn to an intensive volleying attack.

In the Davis Cup Challenge Round at Forrest Hill, in 1921, Tilden was playing Shimidzu at his own game and was losing at it. The Japanese player was within a point of the match. Tilden suddenly completely altered his tactics. He abandoned his chop stroke and used his drive, coming in on everything. And it was by these methods that he began to win, and the match began to take on a different complexion. Eventually the fifth and final set came to him quite easily. Now, this, to my mind, illustrates very vividly the great advantage gained by those who are able completely to change any particular type of game that they are playing for the moment, should it be proving unsuccessful. And this is just what the player with only one idea in his head is quite unable to do. We dare not all of us wait as long as Tilden did in that particular match before changing a losing game, but let us realise the enormous importance of being able to change our game as we choose.

III. SURFACES.

The original surface for a lawn tennis court was, of course, as the name implies, grass; but in my humble opinion the grass court, when we are dealing with such a terribly uncertain thing as the English climate, must die a natural death.

How often, with the notable exception of the Wimbledon courts and one or two

others, does one find oneself playing on a really true grass court? And how many times in the year is the climate accommodating enough to allow for the surfaces being satisfactory for two weeks in succession?

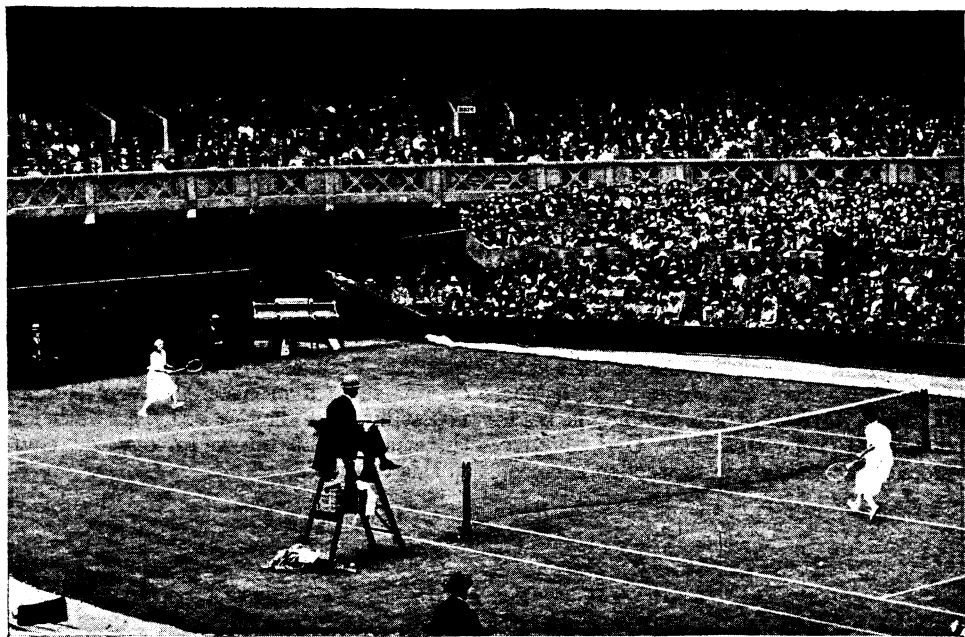
It is quite a different story in countries like America and Australia, where the climate is sure enough and the summer long enough really to cultivate the grass court.

The "cooch" grass of Australia and New Zealand is certainly better kept, and produces a truer court than we have here, but probably climatic conditions play a larger part, and the success is therefore due to

and jab at the ball at the last moment to get it over at all. There is little or no chance of the hard, forceful drive to open up the volleying game.

The rapid increase of hard courts all over the country will go far to improve, not only the play, but the confidence of our home players. On this true surface they can make sure of a good high bound.

The hard courts of France, Belgium, Holland, and Spain are responsible for the good ground stroke equipment of the Continental players. These courts are made from natural sand; the surface is hard and true without being too fast. Personally, I



Mlle. Lenglen and Mrs. Peacock in a semi-final at Wimbledon.

them rather than to the labour of man. The American grass is excellent and true, but it seems to contain something which renders the courts more slippery than over here, and necessitates the continual use of steel points. These have an unfortunate way of cutting up the base-line, which becomes untrue through the imprint of the server's feet, rather like the bowler's hole at cricket. It is on the bad grass courts of this country that I lay a great deal of the blame for our defensive tactics. How is it possible to make a clean, correct stroke taken at the top of the bound, when the ball is liable to do all sorts of strange things? The bound is so often untrue, and one has then to poke

may say that no courts that I have ever tried in any part of the world have suited my game as well as the hard courts in the South of France. They give me the feeling that I need never miss a ball. On the other hand, they seem to present a pitfall to some players. Norman Brookes could not play his best game in the South of France. It was there that Wilding beat him in 1914, but later in the year, on grass at Wimbledon, the result was reversed when they played against each other in the Challenge round. Brookes missed his accustomed foothold for volleying. The slippery surfaces of the Continental courts did not suit him for this reason. I have noticed that the experts of these

particular hard courts adopt a sort of slide to the ball. This undoubtedly pays, and the man who steps into position to make his stroke will find out his mistake. Alonso, Cochet, de Gomat, Washer and Mlle. Lenglen are all products of the hard court game.

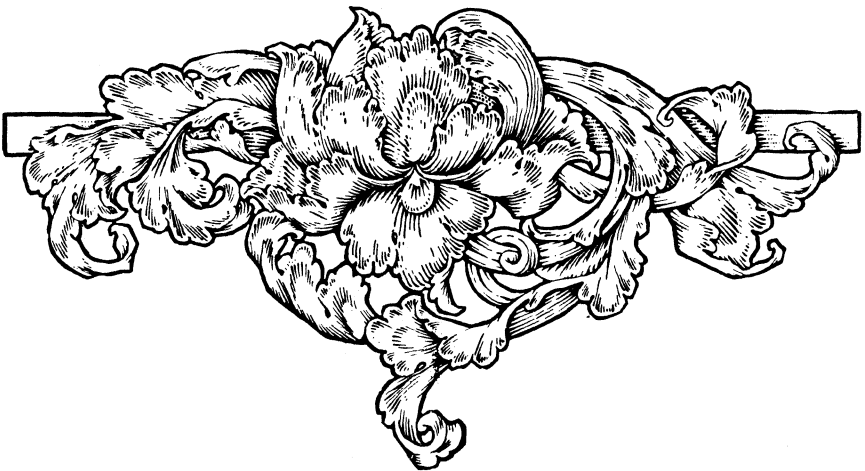
Now, the hard courts of South Africa are composed either of sand or of ant heap, and are quite perfect in their way, and not so slippery. The very high bound they produce seems to have been responsible for the prevalence of the cut shot out there, two of the most formidable exponents of this shot being Winslow and Dr. Rowan. I know of no more beautiful courts in the world than those at Rondebosch, Cape Town, situated as they are at the foot of Table Mountain and close to Groot Schürr, once the home of that immortal pioneer and empire maker Cecil Rhodes, and bequeathed by him to the future Premiers of South Africa. Mud mixed with a little "bhossa" went to the making of the courts in Mesopotamia. They were slow, but, all the same, the surface was quite fair. In England it seems an impossibility to get a natural sand that will bind, so that all the hard court surfaces are, at any rate for the moment, artificial.

The burnt brick makes a good surface, although it is inclined to be loose. It is very hard to make a winning drive on it, as the ball, when it touches the ground, is held, and gets up very straight. Undoubtedly the covered court, with its wooden surface,

gives us the most classical game of all, and it seems to have a greater appeal to the players of other species of ball games. I learnt my game on a covered court, and I fancy I am better on it than on any other.

On this surface a real swing shot is necessary, and it will certainly be conceded that most of the men who have excelled on the wood have a perfect swing—take, for instance, Gobert, Davson, Crawley, Cochet and Decugis.

The ball, when it touches the floor, has quite a skid and comes off it very quickly, and it is the one surface on which it does not pay you to take the ball at the top of the rise. I do not consider it a good training for other surfaces—the conditions are too perfect. The still atmosphere, the perfectly true floor, the admirable lighting, are all so different from what one has to contend with outside. Of course, even wood floors vary, but I think the east court at Queen's Club takes the palm. The Tennis Club de Paris has excellent courts, though rather fast. Sweden and Denmark are deservedly proud of their hard courts, while in America, both in New York and Philadelphia, the covered courts are excellent. I have noticed that players who take the ball very quickly, with a sort of jab or thrust, such as Norman Brookes, Patterson, and Norton, do not succeed on wood. Even Tilden is not at his best on this surface. I believe there is a great future for covered courts in this country.



VALERIE FRENCH

By DORNFORD YATES

*Author of "Anthony Lyveden," "Berry and Co.," "Jonah and Co.,"
"The Brother of Daphne," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.—The great woodland estate of Gramarye was on fire, but nobody cared, for the owner, Colonel Winchester, was in a madhouse, to which local opinion held that he had been driven by some malign influence in this wilderness of a property. The mental breakdown of Anthony Lyveden while working for him was ascribed to the same cause. From a spur of the Cotswolds a man looked down upon the holocaust, but cared no more than anyone else, for he had lost his memory. Sitting at his feet was a small dog for whose presence he could not account, and both were in the last stage of exhaustion when found and given a lift to the next village. After bestowing upon himself and the Sealyham the names of "Jonathan" and "Hamlet," in his inability to remember even his own name, Anthony Lyveden set forth to seek his fortune. About this time Lady Touchstone wrote to her kinsman, Cardinal Forest, "Poor Anthony Lyveden's body was found a fortnight ago. We had him buried at Girdle." She was referring to the search for Anthony, who had disappeared, and to the discovery of a dead body assumed to be his. She had gone abroad with her grief-stricken niece, Valerie French, who had been engaged to be married to Anthony, and at Dinard they made the acquaintance of an English girl, André Strongith'arm—the *fiancée* of Colonel Winchester—who gave Valerie a profoundly moving account of Anthony's life and work at Gramarye, and of the baleful influence of the place upon his brain. A day later André was recalled to England by the news of Colonel Winchester's sudden recovery. Meantime Anthony Lyveden and his dog fell in with Sir Andrew Plague, K.C., upon the Oxford Road, and by this chance encounter Anthony made for himself a friend indeed. Rough and hot-tempered, but kindly, the famous lawyer took a liking to "Jonathan Wood," and, when he learned that, having lost all memory of his own identity, he was beginning life again, engaged him as his secretary. André had been deeply in love with Anthony, but without awakening any response from him; now, however, that he was apparently dead, she determined to try to forget the matter and devote herself to her *fiancé*, Richard Winchester. At the latter's first meeting with her new friend, Valerie, he astounded the two girls by casually remarking that from a cab in Fleet Street he had just seen Anthony Lyveden, only to lose him again among the byways of the Temple. To the answer, "But he's dead! He's buried at Girdle," Winchester replied, "Nonsense! I'd know him anywhere. Besides, he had his dog with him—a Sealyham, with a big, black patch on his back." Then Sir Andrew met Lady Touchstone, and, after a little, Anthony and Valerie met. He did not remember her, and she would not tell him that they had been engaged, but the moment he saw her he loved her with all his heart. The next day he recognised André, riding alone. He remembered her and recalled distinctly that there had been something between them; but that was all. Nervously he accosted her, and from her manner and speech, no less than from the fact that she alone had waked his memory, made sure that when he disappeared he had been pledged to her. As for André, knowing nothing of his loss of memory, she read in his demeanour a declaration of love. Sir Andrew cleared the air with a heavy hand, but the mischief was done, for, when Valerie heard that Anthony had remembered André, she felt cold and shaken. And, though she presently consented to marry him when he remembered her, her yearning for his old love was so insistent that she could hardly endure any expression of the new. Satisfied that Sir Andrew had been unduly harsh with André, Winchester sought him out, "to teach him manners." To save his benefactor, Anthony withstood the angry giant, who was about to attack him, when André intervened and slashed Anthony across the face. The wanton injustice of the blow brought Winchester to his senses, and Anthony was saved. At last Valerie opened her heart to Anthony and told him how she felt. And, while she promised to marry him within the month, she told him plainly that only with his memory would her old deep love for him return.

IX. THE SWINE'S SNOUT.

A CARDINAL laid down his pen and sat back in his chair. For the last three days he had wished for tidings from England, and wished in vain. And now another postman had passed and had left no letters. . . .

His Eminence rose to his feet and started to pace the room, with his chin in his hand. For all his simple faith, John, Cardinal Forest, was growing uneasy.

A servant entered the chamber, salver in hand.

"The postman returned, Monseigneur. He had overlooked this dispatch."

The prelate ripped open the letter with an impatient forefinger.

*Bell Hammer,
New Forest.
Sept. 24th.*

DEAR JOHN,

The weather is improving, and the glass is slowly going up. That stifling, thunderous atmosphere has been done away, so far as I was concerned, in the very nick of time. I tell you, I was being choked. But now, upon the

seventh day of October, Valerie and Anthony Lyveden are to be wed, and I can breathe again. I know this will bring you to England, and the thought exhilarates me. If the Vatican refused you leave, I should wire to the Pope. Our little crowd is huddled about the gate of Paradise, knocking and ringing and staring between the bars. But the porter will hear you. . . .

To Anthony his loss of memory means nothing at all: to Valerie it means—everything. It meant nothing to her, either, till he remembered André Strongi'th arm. . . . Yet it is not just vanity. Valerie is not like that. There is vanity there, but there is something else. So long as his memory was dead, it was out of the question—like the moon. Then, suddenly, the moon was available. Somebody else had had it—for half an hour. . . . There is nothing like potential possession for making a thing desirable. No collector covets the Venus of Milo, because she is not for sale. But if the Louvre were 'To be Sold, Furnished,' half the rich men in America would be licking their lips. I am, of course, discreetly begging the question. Already your shrewd forefinger has found the flaw in my plea, which is that I am valuing his memory at more than it is worth. It is, you will rightly say, not to be compared with Venuses or moons. I cannot help that. Neither can Valerie. You know that she is not whimsical. You know it, John. Yet she craves to be remembered. She smothers her craving as much as ever she can; but it is there, in her heart. And Anthony knows this, and would readily sell his soul to give her her heart's desire. . . .

That is the sum of my trouble—trouble which no outsider would ever suspect. Valerie seems radiant; Anthony the happiest of men. The Pleydells dined with us last night; the Alisons arrived after dinner; they all danced in the gallery, and at two o'clock this morning I felt twenty-six. I confess that six hours later I felt four score, but, then, the flesh is weak. Oh, the glass is rising without a shadow of doubt.

When they are married, they will go abroad or some months; certainly they will visit Rome and sit at your feet, so you must come quickly and give them just cause for veneration. As you know, they will be provocatively rich. Anthony's place in Dorsetshire is very fine; the house is warm and red, and was designed by Inigo Jones; its staircase makes my mouth water. The estate itself is considerable and very lovely. His town house is a convenient luxury: six tiled bathrooms and a

passenger lift. He has bought a new Rolls, as he says, to assert his opulence, and we all four float about the country with the smug superiority of profiteers. 'All four,' I say. . . .

Andrew Plague, whom, if I have done him justice in other letters, you must be itching to meet, is a tower of sanity and strength. I have never met anyone whose contributions to every kind of conversation were so consistently invaluable. His reputation is unspeakable, but Anthony or I stumbled upon the rich vein of humour which underlies his nature and has never been exploited before. Its yield is amazing. This is as well, for I am to be his wife. I am indeed. When you come, you will see why. For one thing, there are some honours too high to be declined; for another, his personality is most compelling—I simply dared not refuse; finally, I love children—and he is nothing but a great child that has never been understood. He insists that he does not love me—is most emphatic upon this point. He has, he declares, the greatest regard for me—delights in my company, but that is all. After all, it is a child's prerogative to lay down the laws of the game. I play it gravely—at times with tears in my eyes. He reminds me of Samson's lion. 'Out of the strong came forth sweetness.' How wild the lion would have been, could he have foreseen his posthumous philanthropy!

He will go on with his work—for a while, at any rate. At the moment he is on holiday—his first for twenty-five years. He likes it so well that his clerk is at his wits' end. The finest mill at the Bar, the only mill which never, never stopped, has at last come to rest. Solicitors can't get their grist ground. They won't go elsewhere, but keep on demanding their meal. And Andrew sits on the terrace and gloats placidly over the consternation he is causing. Not all the time, of course. I won't allow that. Yesterday we made him help Anthony to change a wheel. He protested violently, but I reminded him of Mucius Scaevola and dissolved his wrath in a posset of toothsome wit which he brewed at my expense. I meant Cincinnatus, of course. Now he is most interested in cars and is to learn to drive. I told you he was a child.

And so, you see, our spikenard is exquisite stuff. So clear and exquisite, John, that it shows up that speck of a fly which I have dealt with. If it were cruder ointment, the fly would pass.

Affectionately yours,

HARRIET TOUCHSTONE.

P.S.—Yes, of course, I am hoping most

desperately that he'll remember you. If you were here with them, you'd be catching at straws. Besides, he might—easily.

His Eminence picked up a diary and knitted his brow. . . .

That evening he made his arrangements.

He left for the county of Hampshire the following day.

* * * * *

"The almanac's out," said Lady Touchstone. "The calendar's lost its place. Tomorrow's October, and here's another mid-summer day." She turned to the sideboard. "And mushrooms and all."

"Let me put on the lid," laughed Valerie. "Or can't you bear it?"

"My dear," said her aunt, "my cup is bottomless. And don't talk of lids. It hasn't got one."

"Uncle John's on his way."

Lady Touchstone clasped her hands.

"I shall go to Church this morning," she announced tremulously, "whether there's a service or not. It's—it's only decent."

Sir Andrew looked up from his letters and into the park.

"Will you drive me to Brooch after breakfast?" he said, quietly enough.

"I will," said Anthony.

The women heard the request and wondered, but not for long. After all, the K.C.'s affairs were high matters, and Lyveden was still in his confidence, if not in his pay.

The meal proceeded cheerfully.

Sir Andrew had no desire to be driven to Brooch—and, for the matter of that, no intention, either. But he was extremely anxious to talk with Lyveden undisturbed.

Let us see why.

The moment the knight had appreciated that the curing of Anthony's defect was seriously desired, he had appreciated also that there was only one way to go about it. Whether even that way would lead to success no one on earth could tell. But there was no other way at all. What exasperated Sir Andrew was his knowledge that the way in question was barred—barred by a flimsy rail, only meet, to his mind, to be trodden under foot. This was the Rail of Sentiment.

Valerie French was desiring that Lyveden's memory should return. Very well. It had returned once . . . once only . . . for a moment of time. And that was at the instance of André Strongi'th'arm. . . . Reason suggested bluntly that the latter should try again. There was a chance—a

good sporting chance that she could develop her success, that she would be able to coax the capricious truant back into its cage. The devil of it was that the lady could not be employed. . . .

Why? Because, forsooth, fruit of her picking would lose its flavour. Miss Valerie French was nice—*nice*. So she had the grapes, what did it matter whose fingers reached them down? Such fastidiousness was grotesque—sickening. . . .

However, chafe as he might, Sir Andrew was so sure that André's agency would be unwelcome that he had not so much as hinted at such a venture even to his affianced wife. Instinctively he knew that to do so would be to waste his time. The flimsy rail, in her eyes, was a five-barred gate—which it was sacrilege to approach. These women. . . .

For all that, an honest firm of detectives had not lost sight of the girl. The knight, for what it was worth, received a report of her movements every morning . . . for what it was worth. . . .

It was the latest report, delivered by hand at breakfast, which made Sir Andrew so anxious to talk with Lyveden.

Hitherto the road had been closed—by a rail or a gate. Now it was about to be obliterated. In less than thirty-six hours it would have ceased to exist.

I have, I suppose, a weakness for letting things speak for themselves. Five minutes ago I thrust an original document into your hands. And now, sirs, here is another. In a sense, I am avoiding my duty. Yet this I do, not of laziness, but in a belief that evidence at first-hand is preferred to secondary, however tricked out and garnished the latter may be.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

Sept. 29th.

SIR,

We beg to enclose a copy of the further information, regarding Miss S., obtained by our agent and received by us this evening at eleven o'clock.

Your obedient servants,

LACKLESS AND CO.

MISS S.

Thursday, September 29th.

This lady left Chipping Norton for London to-day.

She was met at Paddington by Col. Winchester, and proceeded to the Berkeley Hotel.

They lunched in the restaurant, and left the hotel together at 2 p.m.

Miss S. returned alone at 6.45 p.m.

At 8 p.m. she proceeded to the Carlton Grill, where she was joined by Col. Winchester.

Shortly before 9.30 p.m. Col. Winchester escorted her back to the Berkeley Hotel, leaving her at the door.

She did not go out again.

Observation concluded at 10.30 p.m.

I have ascertained that :—

(a) Two passages have been taken in the names of Col. and Mrs. Winchester on the Castle Rising, which leaves Southampton for Cape Town on Saturday next.

(b) Col. Winchester and Miss S. are to be married to-morrow (Friday) before the registrar.

(c) Immediately after their marriage the lady will proceed alone to Southampton, where rooms have been reserved for to-morrow (Friday) night at the Grand Hotel.

(d) Col. Winchester will proceed to Southampton on Saturday next by the boat-train which will be run in connection with the Castle Rising.

By a quarter past ten Sir Andrew, Anthony, and Patch were in the Rolls, and the latter was stealing down the long avenue into a flashing wonderland of green and silver.

The forest keeps the road from Bell Hammer to Brooch, walls it with bracken, wards it with beechwoods, screens it with sentinel firs, honours it with the majesty of reverend oaks. And in due season, this side of Napery Green, a certain pride of maples will find for it a sovereign's escort, gorgeous and brilliant beyond belief. Your progress, Sirs, may be royal, any day of the week. But drench all these champions with dew and then clap the gay sunshine on to their trappings. . . . Sirs, you shall see a parade which will beggar Bravery itself. More. The cool, fresh atmosphere is charged with the bouquet of a forgotten wine—wine that was trodden by Romance, bottled by History. You shall, if you please, snuff the very perfume of dreams. On either side, magnificence of green, laced all with silver, stands up and peers or nods its dazzling plumes, the yellow road becomes a scented gallery driven through laughing magic, raised by some Oberon to please his queen, and every sunlit glade leads to some Castle Peerless, each hollow hides the splendid fret of chargers, and every glistening brake stifles the echoes of some haunting call.

When they had gone, perhaps, three-

quarters of a mile, Sir Andrew touched Anthony upon the arm.

"We're coming to a road on the right—a private road. I marked it the other day."

"I know," said Anthony. "There's a gate."

"That's right. I want to go that way."

"Right," said Lyveden. "I don't know where it leads, but——"

"I assume it leads to privacy. That's what I want."

The gate appeared, and Anthony slowed down.

"I'll get out," he said, "and you drive her through. It's all practice. Put her in first and——"

"Another time," said Sir Andrew, opening his door. "I want to get on now—to where we can talk."

He alighted and opened the gate.

Wondering what was afoot, Anthony passed through. . . .

Two minutes later the highway was out of sight, and the car had dropped into a little dell, with a fair greensward on either side and a whispering splash before. Thick screens of foliage turned the spot into a natural court. Indeed, but for the alleys letting the narrow road, the close, green walls stood snug and flawless. Luck was with the two men. They had stumbled upon the very parlour of Seclusion itself.

Anthony slowed to a standstill without a word.

Then he stopped the engine and opened his door.

Patch leaped out excitedly and stared about him.

The dog regarded the car as a magic carpet. Its function was to carry him to pleasant places. If during a run he was not permitted to alight, the carpet had not come off. . . .

After a moment's inspection of his surroundings, he decided that this morning the carpet had done very well. The sward was sweet and might have been laid—probably had been laid—for him to gambol on. As for the brook. . . .

He made for the brown water, panting, going upon three legs.

Sir Andrew lighted a cigar and tilted his hat over his eyes. Anthony proceeded quietly to fill a pipe.

"Circumstances," said the knight slowly, "have forced my hand. I have formed a certain opinion. I formed it some time ago. I proposed, however, to keep that opinion to myself, because, obviously rational though



"With a hammering heart, André kept very close."

it is, I anticipated that it would be rejected, if not offensively, at least with all the horror of uplifted hands. Ugh!" He paused, drew at his cigar and then let the smoke make its own way out of his mouth. "This morning I learned that in some thirty hours' time all opportunity of action upon this rational opinion will be definitely withdrawn. I

therefore count it my duty at least to put this opinion at your disposal. You will decide whether you will use it or no."

Anthony smoked solemnly, looking straight ahead and listening with all his might. A dripping Patch inspected a crevice in the brown brook's bank with every circumstance of suspicion. . . .

Sir Andrew continued slowly.

"You want your memory back. Very good. *You've had it back once.*" The other started. "That girl in the Park revived it. . . . There's a chance that what she

did once she can do again. There's a chance that she can do more. She lighted the fire. It went out because it was neglected. Other bigger things intervened. The point is, *she* lighted it, while no one and nothing else has been able to strike a spark."

"Yes?" said Anthony. "Yes?"

Sir Andrew frowned.

"Whether she can relight it and, having done so, fan the flicker into a steady flame, no one can tell. It's a chance, of course—no more. Personally, I think it's a good one, but that's neither here nor there. But what I *know*—not because I'm a wizard, but because I've a brain in my head—is that it's too good a chance to miss." He thrust his cigar into his mouth and sucked it savagely. Presently he proceeded explosively. "If you want to miss it, you can. It's easy enough. But if you don't want to, well—you'd better look sharp. She's sailing for Cape Town to-morrow afternoon."

There was a long silence.

The frenzied sculpture of the Sealyham, who was trying to dislodge a stone, was clearly audible.

At length—

"How," said Anthony, "do you know?"

Sir Andrew produced the report and gave it into his hand.

The other stared at the sheets.

"You—you've had her watched?"

"I have," said the knight.

"In case I might want to try."

"Yes."

Anthony sighed.

"You're a friend in a million," he said quietly.

"That be hanged," said Sir Andrew.

"Besides, it remains to be seen. And now don't maunder. Read. Read what those serpents say."

Anthony read.

Then he lowered the papers and stared at the dash.

"I think you're right," he said. "I believe that girl could bring my memory back. But—I'm awfully sorry, sir, but I'd rather not try."

Sir Andrew raised his eyes and ground his teeth.

Then he dabbed at the paper with a shaking hand.

"You see what they say?" he cried.

"You see what they say? *Southampton—alone—to-night*. Southampton. Not Dover, or Plymouth, or Liverpool, or any other blamed port. Southampton—*half an hour's*

run from here, where we're sitting now. And to-morrow that girl, who can bring your memory back, ceases to be available. . . ."

Anthony laid a hand upon his arm.

"Don't think me ungrateful," he said. "I'm not. I——"

The giant cut him short.

"Curse your gratitude. I was moved to do what I've done by a sense of duty—a crazy, distorted sense, which a month ago I should have rendered to the devil from whom it came. But now I'm bewitched. . . . Be that as it may, I've set my hand to the plough. The share's pasteboard, the soil rubbish. Never mind. What I've done I've done from a sense of duty towards my neighbour."

"As you please," said Anthony. "Let the gratitude go. I want to explain. Of course, your opinion's rational. It's devilish sound. And I firmly believe that girl could do the trick—which is a galling reflection, because she's the one person living to whom I can't apply." Sir Andrew let out a squeal and clapped his hands to his head. The other proceeded imperturbably. "You see, sir——"

"I don't. I can't. I haven't a beam in my eye. If I had—if I was a slobbering idiot with straws in my hair, I might be able to appreciate this maudlin diffidence. Don't dare to tell me I see. It's—it's slanderous."

"How can I apply to her? She's messed up everything once. It wasn't her fault, but she did. But for her, I shouldn't be in this plight. But for that girl——"

"I know, I know," raged the knight. "Why, that's the core of the matter, you frightening fool. You've got the stick of truth by the dirty end. That wretched girl is the witch of this rotten fairy tale. She's turned you into a scapegoat, and *she's* the only being can change you back."

"She can't, sir, she can't. That girl's my evil genius. She can't undo what she's done, because she's evil. She's done grave harm already. If she recovered my memory, she'd tear the whole thing up. My case is bad, but not desperate. I've only got to remember, to pull it round. But if through *her* I got my memory back, my case would be finished—dead. The only chance I have of pulling it round would have gone—been sold for a shadow. It'd be lost for ever."

Sir Andrew smote with his hand upon the arm of his seat.

"You're mad," he groaned, "mad. The

girl's not evil. What she did once she did by accident. What she would do to-night she'd do by design—honest, faithful design. If you and she are faithful, where's the harm? Together you're weaving a garland to lay at Silvia's feet. So the flowers are pulled in honesty, what does it matter to Silvia whence they come?"

"It matters much," said Anthony. "She's a woman. She wants the garland—longs for it. But if André Strongi'th'arm showed me the way to make it, she'd have no use for it at all."

"And you," screeched Sir Andrew, "you're to pander to this indecent whim—humour this queasy wish-wash—muck and be mucked. . . . Goats and monkeys!" he wailed. "Aren't you a man? What if the weaker vessel does fret and toss upon the flood? Isn't it your proud office to bear her up? Are you to play the part of the hungry Greek—following, fawning, cringing, a mindless slave? Because she finds it warm, are you to sweat? Are you to shiver because she finds it cold? You shake your head. . . . Then take the line you should. Lift up your eyes and look. God made you honest and gave you common sense—talents worth having. Why chuck them into the draught? Use them. Do as they say. They never as yet led any man off the path. The Will-o'-the-Wisp's this cursed Sentiment. *That's* the false prophet. 'Go up and prosper,' it spouts. 'Go up and prosper'—with its lying tongue in its cheek." He snatched out his watch and slapped the shining dial. "In thirty—twenty-four hours—your chance will be gone. Miss it, and you'll repent your folly all the days that you live. I know what I'm talking about. I've seen something of life. Fortune doesn't press favours on us poor fools. If we decline them, she smiles and goes her way. You may shout till you're black in the face, but she'll never turn back."

He stuffed the watch into his pocket, threw himself back in his seat, and mopped his face.

Anthony sat very still, staring upon the terrier, who had abandoned the water and was rolling luxuriously upon the sward.

At length—

"I can't," he said. "I daren't. It isn't sentiment that prevents me—I promise you that. It's understanding, sir. I know how Valerie feels, for I'd feel the same. I shan't regret my decision. If I never get back my memory, I shan't regret it. For me my memory is above price. Yet to buy

it like this would be paying far more than it's worth. What's the use of a poison which'll heal a withered arm?"

Sir Andrew wrenched open his door and descended violently upon the sward.

"So be it!" he roared. "Sit in my lady's chamber and drift to hell. Be played with. Worship each fleeting vanity. Leap at each maggoty whim. First it's a white blackbird, then it's the way it's snared. Next it'll be the colour of your hair or the set of the nose on your face. I've warned you. I've done what I can. But you're besotted . . . *drunk—blind drunk* . . . soaked with that sickly poison the devil keeps for fools. . . . *Love? Invalid port! Snake-sweat!*"

With the laugh of a maniac, the giant flung up the road and presently pounded out of sight. Not out of earshot, though. For a long time Lyveden could hear him alternately laughing and yelling like one possessed.

As for Patch, he was deeply disturbed. The dog had seen many tempests, but never one like this. For a while he stood still, staring in the direction in which Sir Andrew had gone. Then he ran to his master, whining tremulously. The latter made him free of what comfort he had.

* * * * *

The train tore through a station and plunged into the countryside.

Mrs. Winchester folded the map which she had been studying, tossed it into her dressing-case, swung her feet on to the seat and lighted a cigarette.

"One last splash," she murmured, regarding two admirable legs, "and then, ever after, the loyal and dutiful wife. One last run with *la grande passion*, and then—finish. It's perfectly monstrous, of course—far the worst thing of all the many I've done. Aunt Charlotte would become unconscious if she knew. She'd probably die—shock to the pious system. But, then, she won't know. With luck, nobody'll know—except Mrs. Richard Winchester and Major Lyveden." She caught her underlip between her teeth and bit it feverishly. "God knows how I'm to manage it, but it must be done. I'm twelve miles away, and I've got about eighteen hours. If, after getting so far, I can't scrape home, I ought to be shot." Moodily she regarded the end of her cigarette. "As a matter of fact," she muttered, "I ought to be shot any way. Bluffing Richard into staying in Town to-night was the rottenest thing a woman ever did. But I'll mend it—I swear

I will. I'll make him the finest wife a man ever had. . . . But I must see Anthony again—I *must* take back that blow."

André was nervous.

Who goes hungry, but resolute, is said to tighten his belt. The idea, I imagine, is to make belief that his belly is full—the pressure of the belt suggesting the recent consumption of a square meal. By talking aloud and defiantly, André was 'tightening her belt.' In a word, she was making belief that she saw nothing to fear.

At eleven o'clock that morning she had been lawfully wed. Already her husband was sixty miles away; very soon he would be distant some seventy-two. She had arranged this deliberately, in order that that evening she might visit another girl's man. Her husband must not know this, neither must the other girl—obviously. Nor, indeed, must anyone. 'Fraud,' 'desertion,' and 'trespass' were not nice words. Coupled with the name of a bride not twenty-four hours old, they were positively ugly. Indubitably *no one must know*.

Irrationally and somewhat half-heartedly she argued that she could not leave England without asking Lyveden's pardon for striking his face. This was, of course, a fiction. André had a large heart. She loved her husband, she loved Lyveden, and she loved herself. Of the three, her love for her husband was the most stable, and her love for Lyveden the most hot. Still, mad as she surely was to see him again, to do the girl justice, the very recklessness of the adventure considerably enhanced its charm. The idea of one last scandalous escapade was most appealing. That time and tide were against her but whetted her will. To be able to look back later from the more or less peaceful *fauteuil* of married life and see the notch she had cut upon the wall of Scandal, feet—yards higher than that of anyone else, was an alluring prospect. Again, it was live melodrama, and André liked playing the heroine very much. I do not mean that if she and her husband had perceived Anthony Lyveden upon the other side of the street, and Winchester had urged her to go and speak with him, André would not have done so with an eager heart. She would have leaped at the chance. But to filch the chance out of the very strong-box of Decorum—that was to turn an act into an exploit. André and d'Artagnan would have agreed together.

The train slid into Southampton at set

of sun, and ten minutes later Mrs. Winchester was following a page to her sitting-room upon the first floor of the Grand Hotel.

As the boy opened the door, a priest, who was sitting by the window, started to his feet.

The boy exclaimed, André, who had been upon the point of entering, recoiled, and the door was hurriedly and apologetically closed, only to be reopened an instant later.

The occupant of the room stood before them.

He was a handsome man, tall and fresh-faced, silver-haired. His air was gentle and dignified; his clear, blue eyes declared him honest and kind; his mouth was firm, yet humorous. He was clearly a prelate of consequence, but certainly a man in a million.

"I apologise profoundly," he said. "I've no doubt that this is your room. It is not mine. Mine's opposite. I asked to be allowed to telephone, and as there was no instrument in my room, they showed me in here. Pray—"

The rest of the sentence was lost in the sudden stammer of the telephone-bell.

Instinctively the prelate turned. . . .

"That's your call," said André.

"It's of no consequence. I can speak downstairs."

He sought to pass. . . .

"Of course not," said André, detaining him. "Please speak here. Why on earth should I mind?" She turned to the page. "Which is my bedroom?"

"I cannot make use of your room at the expense of your convenience."

"All right," laughed André, passing into the room. "And now, do answer, or they'll cut you off."

The man smiled his thanks and stepped to the instrument.

"Yes?" he said gently. "Yes? . . . That's right." André slid into a chair and took out a cigarette-case. "Hullo . . . Is that Bell Hammer?" The girl started violently, and the case slipped from her hand. "Can I speak to Miss French? . . . Oh . . . Is Lady Touchstone there? . . . Cardinal Forest. . . . Cardinal Forest. . . . Yes." There was a pause, during which his Eminence stared out of the window, and André, with shaking fingers, contrived to light a cigarette. At length: "Is that you, Harriet? It's John. . . . Yes, I'm speaking from Southampton—the Grand. I've just arrived. . . . No, but it seemed easier this way. . . . Listen, Harriet. Will you send

for me, or shall I get a car? . . . Very well. . . . Wait a minute." He looked at his watch. "Ten minutes to six. . . . But if they won't be back before half-past, hadn't I better. . . . Very well. . . . But, Harriet. . . . Let her come alone—I mean, without him. . . . I'd like a word with her first. . . . All right, about seven, then. . . . Good-bye."

The Cardinal replaced the receiver and turned to his hostess.

"I am so very much obliged. I think few people would have been so nice about such an intrusion."

André tried not to tremble and managed to laugh.

"You have nothing," she said uncertainly, "to thank me for."

His Eminence bowed and passed out.

Fifteen minutes later Mrs. Winchester was in a hired car, hammering over the road to Napery Green.

Luck was with her, manifestly.

By an extraordinary accident she had been apprised of the enemy's orders of the day.

For an hour from half-past six, while Anthony would be at Bell Hammer, Valerie would be out of the way . . . for an hour. . . .

Feverishly she consulted her wrist-watch for the fiftieth time. . . .

If it took half an hour to get from Bell Hammer to Southampton, it presumably took half an hour to get from Southampton to Bell Hammer. She would be there, then, by twenty-five minutes to seven. Very good. But before she approached the house, she must be certain that Valerie French had left. With luck—more luck, she would pass her upon the road. . . .

She put her head out of a window and cried to the young mechanic not to drive so fast.

Bell Hammer stood back from the road. So much the map said. How far back, she could not tell. But she could not drive up to the house. Lady Touchstone was there, and Plague. . . . She would have to leave the car and walk from the road. And if the house stood well back, that would take time. She had known drives a mile long. . . .

André thrust out her head and told the young mechanic to increase his pace.

The light was failing now. Two days ago summer time had come to an untoward end. But the evening was warm and dry, and the air was as soft as silk.

The car snarled through a village, and

André peered at the map. By holding this close to the window, she could just identify her road. She decided that the echoing hamlet was Blue Sleeves. And Blue Sleeves lay four miles from Napery Green. . . .

André put up the map and kept her eyes glued to the shadowy road ahead.

At Napery Green they would have to turn to the left. Then, if the map was honest, Bell Hammer was standing about a mile away—a mile and a half, perhaps. . . .

André determined to inquire at Napery Green.

As they ran into the village, she peered at her watch.

Half-past six.

The driver slowed up for instructions, and André got out.

She was back in a moment.

"There's a lodge on the left of the road about a mile further on. Don't drive in. Drive past—about twenty yards."

The mechanic nodded.

Hitherto, since leaving Southampton, the roads had been theirs; but now they were on the highway which runs from Brooch to Bloodstock and carries its share of traffic on summer afternoons.

Three char-a-bancs went raving—lumbering arks of wassail, noisy, affectionate; a racing car stole by, muttering thunder; bicyclists flitted like ghosts; and presently a laudaulette passed. But the chauffeur was smoking. Valerie was not there. . . .

The tall gates were open, and there was a light in the lodge.

André descended and told the man to wait.

"Pull up a little more. A car may be coming out. I shan't be long—about a quarter of an hour."

The youth glanced at his watch. Then—"Or right," he said sulkily. "A quarter-vanour."

André hesitated.

Then she opened her bag. By the light of a lamp she picked out a five-pound note.

"I might be longer than I think. But, whatever happens, stay here until I come." She folded the note and tore it clean in two. "There's half a fiver. If you want the other half, do as I say."

She left the fellow staring and stepped to the tall gates. For a second she stood peering. Then she flashed by the lodge and into the drive.

It was dark indeed now, and she could not see ahead. The avenue might have been endless. She sped up the smooth roadway, impatient for a view of her goal. . . .

Suddenly the beam of a search-light shot out of the darkness in front of her, raking the park on her right, swinging her way. In an instant she was bathed in brilliance—blinded. . . . Then the beam swung on past and away.

For a moment the girl stood spellbound, watching the unearthly shaft sweep, like some fatal, ruthless blade, over the sleeping pastures, stripping the night naked. . . .

Then the pulse of an engine fell upon her ears.

A car was coming. Plainly the drive went curling up to the house, and the car had been rounding a bend. Its headlights. . . .

Valerie! It was she, of course. It was Valerie leaving for Southampton to—

With a shock, André remembered that the car was coming her way. And she was full in its path. Any second that merciless beam would betray her as surely no poacher was ever betrayed before. She darted behind an elm not an instant too soon.

The shaft of light swung round, and the car with it. In a moment the avenue had become a blazing, sonorous quire.

Her back pressed close against the sheltering trunk, the girl felt dazed, terrified. . . . The narrowness of her escape, the abrupt rout of that darkness on which she leaned, the sudden overthrow of silence, rammed home the villainy of her adventure. She was lurking—a thief in the night. Her plunging senses snatched at the parable. That fearful, resonant glare was Doom, approaching his prey. She had thought to avoid it, but now it had altered its course. It was coming straight for her. She could hear—*feel* its advance. In a second it would crash into her elm. She awaited the shock dully. . . .

Then the squall passed, and she was left sick and shaken, leaning against her bulwark with her knees sagging and her chin on her breast. . . .

After a minute or two she lifted her head.

Then she stood upright and wiped the sweat from her brow.

"Of all the painful fools" she muttered, with a tremulous laugh. "If I'm going to get cold feet, I'd better clear out." She dabbed her face with a handkerchief and felt for her puff. "Heavens alive, what have I got to fear? Besides, my nerve's the only thing I've got. Without it, I'm done. With it. . . ." She powdered her face thoughtfully. "Well, I've got away with a lot since I was foaled."

The storm had cleared the air.

André felt better than she had felt for hours.

When she stepped back into the roadway, the thief had slunk out of sight. In his stead, a cool-headed musketeer smiled, tilted his chin and presently cocked his extremely expensive hat.

Had André known that the car which had just swept by was carrying two people, whose names she had never heard—Captain and Mrs. Pleydell, friends of the house—that Valerie, who had returned unexpectedly early, had used a road which was not shown on her map, that Cardinal Forest and his niece were at that very moment shaking the dust of Southampton off their tires, I doubt if her nerve would have responded so handsomely to the spur of her will. What is quite certain is that she would not have wasted a valuable ten minutes upon a deliberate reconnaissance of the curtilage of the mansion.

Be that as it may, the stable-clock was striking the hour of seven when the girl glided on to the terrace at the back of the house.

A window was open here—open wide. From the garden below you could look right into the room. This was a library—you could see the books ranged orderly upon the walls. More. There was someone there. Someone was sitting, smoking, in a deep chair. . . . They seemed to be reading. . . .

The other windows were black. Only upon the first floor a faint radiance about the sides of two rectangles argued drawn curtains with a light behind.

André stole over the flags, holding her breath. . . .

Three yards from the library window her foot struck some object which moved—went rolling and making a dull sound. It was a terrier's toy—a piece of rubber cast in the shape of a bone.

Instantly came the scuttle of paws upon parquet, and André fell back against the wall.

Patch appeared upon the terrace, pricked, suspicious. For a full minute he stood, staring out into the night, listening, motionless. Then he turned slowly and re-entered the room. . . .

With a hammering heart, André crept very close.

She could hear the fire now—the soft hiss of logs and the lick and flutter of flame.

As she bent forward, a page flicked.

"Come in, Mrs. Winchester," said Plague, quietly enough.

André's heart gave one tremendous bound.

Then she stepped forward and over the window-sill.

The dog started to meet her, but the knight never moved. The latter's back was turned and he was at ease in a chair, with a cigar in his mouth and an open book upon his knee. By his shoulder a delicate pillar of bronze was distributing the light of three lamps hung from its capital.

After a cursory inspection of the girl, the terrier turned away. He knew who it was.

For a moment André stood still, finger to lip.

Then—

"How did you know?" she breathed.

"I heard you a moment ago. They telephoned just now to say you were on your way."

"Who?"

"Agents in my employ. As you've had Lyveden watched, so I've watched you. What are you here for?"

"I want to see him again."

Sir Andrew frowned. Then he laid down his book and rose to his feet.

"You can't do that," he said firmly. "There are"—he swallowed vehemently—"most powerful reasons why you and he should not meet."

André stared.

"What are they? If you mean I'm married—well, that's my affair. If you mean that he's engaged—"

"I don't," said Plague shortly. "As reasons go, those two are pretty sound. But mine are sounder still. I'm sorry," he added kindly. "If I could have stopped you coming, I would have done so."

"You like me," said André suddenly. "Why?"

Sir Andrew blinked thoughtfully.

Then—

"You're bold and downright," he said. "That may or may not be why. But I like you well enough to wish you, at least, no ill. Therefore go as you came. You can't see Lyveden, and you mustn't be found. I shall say nothing."

André took her seat upon the arm of a chair.

"I want to see him," she said.

Sir Andrew's face took on a darker shade.

"Don't be a fool," he snapped. "I may like courage, but bravado I loathe. You're out of order. I'm trying to get you back."

"Listen," said André. "That night, at your house, I struck him. I cursed him for an outsider, and then, when he begged my pardon, I slashed him across the face. You're wise. I expect you know why I did those things. . . . But he doesn't look for motives which don't appear. He thinks me a howling cad, and I—I don't like that."

"If that's why you came," said Plague, "I'll put that right. You know and can trust me. I say, I'll put that right. And now take an old man's counsel and go your way. You mayn't've won so much, but you haven't lost. And that's as well, for you can't afford to lose."

"You forget I'm out to win," was the cool reply. "Let me see him, and I'll go."

The knight stamped upon the floor. Then he hurled his cigar into the grate and set his teeth.

"Can you appreciate," he hissed, "that you are not in a position to dictate? That this is Miss French's house? That you have not been admitted, but have 'gained admission' thereto? That I can ring that bell and have you shown out? That scandal and ignominy are preparing to spring upon your shoulders?"

"I came to see Major Lyveden. If he refuses to see me, I'll go like a lamb. I was foolish to come like this. I ought to have gone to the door and rung the bell."

"So should burglars. But they don't—for obvious reasons."

The girl rose to her feet.

"You think," she said coldly, "that——"

"I know," said Plague. "Why bandy words with me?"

"Then ring that bell," flashed André. "Send word to Major Lyveden that I am here. If he declines to see me, I'll go as I came."

With a frightful effort, the giant controlled his voice.

"Madam," he said, taking his watch from his pocket, "I give you two minutes in which to leave this house. If when that time has expired you are still here, I shall write to your husband to-night, relating this visit of yours and requesting him to restrain you from molesting Major Lyveden again."

André went very white.

"Write by all means," she said. "If you're quick, I'll take the note. But, first, will you ring that bell?"

In a way the request was needless, for here the door was opened, and Valerie French and the Cardinal entered the room.

Valerie was speaking.

"Don't thank me, Uncle John. I'm in your debt. The smell of that air! I'll bet that's something Italy hasn't got. Nemi must be very lovely, but the breath of the New Forest"—here she perceived Mrs. Winchester, and paused—"is the scent Time uses when he wants to pretend he's young. Let me introduce my uncle, Cardinal Forest—Miss Strongi'th'arm—Sir Andrew Plague."

Her self-command took everyone by the throat.

Sir Andrew, whose nerve was his pride, felt like a private-schoolboy and almost stood upon one leg. His Eminence, for whom the name "Strongi'th'arm" had been like an evil spirit besetting his darling's sleep, put a hand to his head and, with a fumbling brain, strove to accept the reports which his eyes and ears were offering. As for André, the feeling of inferiority which Valerie always inspired became positively painful. A meek lady-in-waiting, whom the queen has surprised in the act of trying on the crown, would have been less discomfited.

Before the silence could settle, Valerie put out her hand.

"I'd no idea you were coming," she said, with a quiet smile. "Of course you'll stay to dinner, if not the night. Now that I come to think of it, I saw a car by the lodge." She turned to the men. "Uncle John, you know your room. Sir Andrew, it's time to dress. André and I are not going to change to-night, so we'll give you twenty minutes' start."

The Cardinal girt up his loins and turned to the knight.

"It sounds as if we weren't wanted," he said, with a grave smile. "She doesn't mean it, of course. For one thing, we're too decorative. But let's go—just to teach her a lesson."

"*Non docent, sed discunt*," said Plague, and followed him out—unsteadily.

Patch, who had run to greet Valerie, watched the retiring lawyer and then returned to the hearth.

As the door closed, Valerie touched the other upon the arm.

"Come and sit down by the fire."

André shivered. Then she lifted her head.

"I must go," she said abruptly, holding her eyes upon the ground. "I beg your pardon, and—I'm much obliged."

"What for?"

"For covering my retreat. It's not a thing the—the enemy often does."

She turned to the window.

"Am I your enemy?" said Valerie.

"You have no choice. I'm an outlaw. I've been—warned off."

"Why do you talk like this—like an escaped convict? And if you were, you know I'd harbour you, as you would me. You've never let me down."

"That's not my fault," said André, facing about. "It's Andrew Plague's. Three weeks ago he stopped me, and he's stopped me to-night. I should hang on to him," she added, with a bitter laugh. "He's a dog in a million. A thief doesn't stand an earthly when he's around."

"What," said Valerie, "do you mean?"

"Why d'you think," said André, "I left my car in the road? Because I didn't want your household to know I was here. I didn't come in by the door, you know. Thieves don't. I came in by the window. And I knew you were out. To be frank, I never dreamed you'd be back so soon. . . . And then, having 'effected my entrance,' I met the dog. I was doing my best to bluff him when you arrived." She spread out her hands and set her head on one side. "So, you see, you're perfectly right—I've not let you down. I've done my level best to, and I'd got a jolly long way, when that excellent dog chipped in and cramped my style."

"I wish to Heaven," said Valerie, "I had your pluck." The other started. "If I were a man, I think I should be mad about you. Your courage is dazzling. You set it above pride, above safety, above success. And, because you do, all these things, as they say, are added unto you. And always will be. . . ." She turned to the grate and spread her hands to the blaze. "What did you come for?"

"What do thieves come for?"

"To steal, I suppose," said Valerie.

"That's right. I came to steal. I came to see him."

"I don't call that stealing," said Valerie, ringing the bell by her side. "If I wanted to see Richard Winchester, I shouldn't ask you."

André laughed.

"You won't strike, will you?" she said. "I've bared my shoulders and put the whip in your hand. I've done it before. But you won't strike. I suppose I'm too rotten—too low. . . . even for that . . . leprous."

A servant entered, and Valerie turned her head.

"Ask Major Lyveden to come here."



"What are you doing?" cried André hoarsely, panic-stricken. "I'm pleasing myself. Don't go. You came unasked. Now I request you to stay."

The man bowed and withdrew.
"What are you doing?" cried André, hoarsely, panic-stricken.

"I'm pleasing myself. Don't go. You came unasked. Now I request you to stay. I have the right, I think. You've given it me." She glanced at a clock. "Dinner's at eight—in thirty-five minutes' time."

With that, she smiled very steadily, stepped to the door, and passed out.

Only the great can do great things as

great things should be done. But then Valerie French was a great lady.

As for André, the girl felt rather cheaper and much more frightened than she had ever felt in her life.

That she did not there and then make good her escape shows, I think, that Valerie's personality, like the Cheshire cat's grin, was surviving her presence in the flesh. The steady, blue eyes were gone, but the look of them was still there. Before it, as a sheep before her shearers, André was dumb.

She stood as Valerie had left her, leaning against a table, with her lips parted and her beautiful head thrown back. . . .

Stretched upon the hearth, his nose between his paws, the Sealyham regarded her silently.

Anthony came in swiftly, dressed for dinner.

"You want me, Valerie? I——"

He saw who it was, and stopped dead.

André never moved.

Only the dog jumped up and ran to his lord.

"What's the matter?" said Anthony. "Are you ill?"

"No," breathed André, "I'm not. I wish I was. I wish I was dead."

There was a pause.

"I don't know why you say that," said Lyveden awkwardly. "But I don't know what's happened. I'd no idea you were here. Of course, Plague had no right to ask you to come."

A faint frown gathered on André's brow.

Then she lifted her head and turned to the man.

"Plague—ask me to come? What do you mean?"

Anthony stared.

"Didn't he get you here?"

"Plague?"

"Yes."

"I don't understand," said André. "Why should Plague get me here?"

"We quarrelled about it this morning," said Anthony. "He wanted me to see you, and I refused."

"Why did he want us to meet?"

"Because he believes that you could bring my memory back."

"And why," said André slowly, "did you refuse?" The man hesitated. "Don't you want it back?"

"Yes, yes, I do."

"Then why did you refuse?"

"I want it for Valerie. She wants my

memory back. And—and I don't think she'd care about it if it came through another girl."

A curious gleam leapt into André's eyes—almost a glitter. She veiled it instantly.

"No," she said slowly, "I don't suppose she would. I shouldn't either." An odd strained note slid into her voice. "It would be a sort of stigma—suggesting that, however you and she felt, down at the bottom of things, the—the other girl had meant more."

"That's right," cried Anthony eagerly. "You've got it in one. I couldn't make Plague see it. Of course the suggestion would be false——"

"Of course. 'False as—as dicers' oaths.'"

The irony of the quotation, the hysterical mockery in her tone, fell upon deaf ears.

The man continued excitedly.

"Exactly. But what—what'd make it so ghastly is that, *so long as she and I lived, the stigma would stay*. Once my memory's back, it's back for good. The mischief'd be irreparable. It'd last——"

The look in the big, brown eyes cut short the sentence. Tense, burning, passionate, it bored its way into his brain. Dumbly the man stared back—fascinated, paralysed. . . .

He was snared—netted—lured . . . caught in the very toils which he had been teaching his enemy to spread. . . .

Already something was stirring at the back of his brain . . . something. . . .

"Till death," breathed André. "It'd last . . . till death. . . ."

The room seemed to grow smaller—the walls were closing in: the scene—my God, the scene was changing! André was in evening dress—with a great fur coat, flung open, and a throat and chest like snow. Where the light caught it, her wonderful, auburn hair burst into flame. Behind her gaped a huge fireplace, and the breathless silence of Night in the grip of Frost hung like a pall. . . .

Suddenly the girl recoiled and clapped her hands to her mouth. The burning look in her eyes changed to a bright stare of horror.

"Don't!" she shrieked. "Don't! Think what you're doing, man! My God, d'you want——"

Quick as lightning she turned and struck at the elegant lamp-stand with all her might.

The pillar fell with a crash. . . .

Wrapped in the sudden darkness, neither she nor Lyveden could see where the other

stood. Gradually the glow of the fire silhouetted two shadowy forms. . . .

André was whispering hoarsely.

"Where—did you—meet me—before?"

There was a dreadful silence.

At length—

"I—I don't know," faltered the man.

"I—I can't remember."

A sigh . . . the brush of a dress . . . a footfall. . . .

When Anthony pulled himself together, groped his way to the door and turned a switch, the room was empty.

Only the Sealyham stood by the broken pillar, with his ears back, tentatively wagging his tail. . . .

A further instalment of this story will appear in the next number.



THE BELL BRANCH.

ANGUS has shaken his magical bough
 And set the bells a-swinging;
 The wounded warriors feel no pain,
 And sorrowful ladies smile again
 At the music of their ringing.
 Two wonderful birds follow after him now,
 So clear and true their singing,
 So sweet and shrill, no mortal will
 Resist the sleep they're bringing.

O Angus, Angus, Master of Love,
 Shiver your branch to-day,
 And over the hills, with the clouds above,
 Carry my soul away;
 Let me dwell in your green-walled *liss*,*
 With flowery garlands crowned,
 Where I shall feel the joy and the bliss
 Which here I have not found.

* Fort

BARBARA DRUMMOND.

THE DISCOVERY OF NESTING

By BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

THE little village of Nesting was within thirty miles of London, but civilisation had done very little to contaminate it. It was four miles from any railway-station, and was not on the road to anywhere. It possessed neither electricity, nor gas, nor main drainage, and its water supply was from wells. Most of its inhabitants had never been in London in their lives, and many of them had never been out of the village for a night. A narrow lane, uninviting to motorists, left the main road and, after about a mile, found Nesting; it then looked round in a despairing way and rejoined the main road further down.

The village possessed one shop, described as a grocery and general store, and controlled by Mrs. Elwood. She had sandy grey hair and mild blue eyes. She had no teeth worth mentioning, and drew in her thin underlip till it must have bumped against her tonsils. Her figure was flat with no noticeable waist-line. Personally she was not so unclean as some of the old ladies in Nesting, but cleanliness was not a hobby of hers. Had there been a competition in such things, open to the whole world, she would have taken the gold medal for General Inefficiency and the first prize for Conversational Flow. She had a kind heart and was uniformly cheerful.

She kept no books. Her shop was in wild disorder, and she never knew where anything was. She rarely remembered the price of anything, but tried to ask enough. If she had to weigh anything, she generally found that she had mislaid the weight she required; the one-ounce weight roamed so frequently that it was understudied by a potato which had been tested to weigh one ounce or thereabouts. Children preferred the potato-weight to the cold, official variety. It gave two more acid drops for your money.

One or more of the articles she was supposed to stock would always be missing, and this gave her a strange satisfaction as evidence that business had been done.

"Bacon we are entirely out of," she would say, almost as if she were proclaiming that she had conquered some bad habit, and would then become philosophical or at least talkative. "You may not have noticed it, but sometimes a thing lasts longer than it does others, and that is so specially about bacon. Now, that last side I had was off of Mr. Tewson, not ten minutes away. He's black Berkshires, and breeds and kills himself. Home cures, too. And I'd sooner buy my bacon off of some pig as I knows personally. I can get it from the wholesale and put on the rail on receipt of postcard, but it's not the same thing, and you can't say it is. So when I can—and that's not always—I gets a side off of Mr. Tewson. But it never lasts me as long as I think it will, for the best things is the shortest, and all comes to an end if you keep on cutting at it. I did think of writing the wholesale yesterday, and then it crossed my mind that I might see Mr. Tewson coming out of church on Sunday morning, and then I could ask him if he had another side he could spare me, though not going into the figures till Monday, as the Fourth Commandment teaches us. So if you're passing one day next week, and are still in the same mind about bacon, I might let you have some. Now, if it had been cheese as you'd been wanting—oh, you noticed it, had you? Yes, I keeps it under the counter, being pressed for space. No need to show it, for it advertises itself. That's a powerful-flavoured cheese, that is. When you eats that you knows you're eating something. I had a morsel of it with my supper last night, and it kept the roof of my mouth

all of a tingle for an hour afterwards, just as if something had stung it "

It may seem surprising that Mrs. Elwood ever made a living out of that shop, but she did, though it was not till after the discovery of Nesting that she became actually prosperous. If you lived in Nesting, either you dealt with Mrs. Elwood or you went four miles to the next shop. That was all to the good for Mrs. Elwood. The local products that she sold—bacon, eggs, honey, butter—were all excellent. The wild miscellany that she obtained from "the wholesale," including straw hats, mouth-organs, and patent medicines, was not too bad for the simple and submissive natives of Nesting.

There is some dispute as to who was the original discoverer of Nesting. The honour is claimed by that eminent landscape-painter Edwin Sepal, R.A. There is no doubt that Mr. Sepal was a pioneer, and that he was very largely the cause of the extraordinary popularity that Nesting enjoyed for several years. But Sepal's great Academy picture of Nesting bears the date of September in the year previous to its exhibition, and we have the artist's own word for it that he began the picture within a week of his first chance visit to Nesting—the result of a motor breakdown. But, though Sepal did not know it, Nesting had already been discovered by a young journalist named Robert Boyes in the previous July, as the date of the issue of *The Daily Monitor* in which Boyes's article appeared clearly shows.

Boyes was taking exercise on a push-bike with no settled objective. He thought that he was taking a holiday. As a matter of fact, he could never take a holiday, for the journalistic instinct never left him, and he saw everything in its aspect in print. It chanced that his eye fell on the sign-post proclaiming that Nesting was one mile distant at the precise moment that he became aware of his desire for beer. So he turned down the cart-track. As he neared Nesting he met two farm labourers. They touched their hats respectfully and said "Good morning, sir." Boyes nearly fell off his bicycle—nothing like that had ever happened to him before.

But as Boyes subsequently said in his article, when he entered the village of Nesting he went back at least a century. There was not a villa in the place. There were cottages with oak beams and thatched roofs. There were cottages with mellowed tiles. Beyond them, in a blue haze, were low

ridges of hills, well wooded and with a waterfall sparkling in the sun. Immediately before him was the inn—"The Royal George." A portrait of George the Third—and by no means a bad portrait—served as a sign, as, indeed, it had done since the end of the eighteenth century. On the bench in front of the diamond-paned windows of the inn sat an old shepherd. He wore a genuine white smock. He carried a genuine crook with a curved metal handle. His fingers were bent lovingly round the handle of a willow-pattern mug. His dog slept at his feet. Out from the door of the inn came the oldest inhabitant, bent at right angles with rheumatism, and walking with a stick. Ducks wandered leisurely down the street towards the pond under the trees.

"This cannot be," said Robert Boyes to himself. "This sort of thing is only seen on the stage. It doesn't belong to real life at all. I've gone mad from over-exertion on that bike, and I'm suffering from delusions." The thought of over-exertion reminded him that he had now become appreciably thirstier, and he passed into the inn. The old shepherd touched his soft hat and said "Good day."

A comfortable-looking landlord in a red waistcoat drew a pint of beer for him, and concealed the curiosity that he felt, for strangers did not come to Nesting. Boyes made himself comfortable on an old settle and looked around him. The sporting prints hung on the walls were absolutely genuine and worth a good deal of money. The beer was remarkably good, and he said as much to the landlord.

"Yes," said the landlord, "this is a free house, and I buy where I like. It's been in my family for four generations now. It's a good deal bigger really than we need here. You might care to step upstairs and see the banquetting-room. Parson makes a lot of fuss about that room, but we scarcely ever use it. Comes in handy when the cricket club holds its annual."

The banquetting-room was, so Boyes guessed, about thirty-five feet by twenty. It was panelled, and the panelling was Jacobean. There were a few portraits in gilt frames, obviously of the late eighteenth century. Boyes had no special knowledge of antiques, but he found himself wondering how many thousands that room and its contents were worth.

Almost as if he had read his thoughts, the landlord said: "They do tell me that all this here might be worth money, if I cared

to sell it. But I don't like change. Nobody in Nesting does. I like to keep things the way my fathers had them before me."

More and more amazed, Boyes asked if he would be able to get any luncheon at the inn.

"Well," said the landlord, "there's a cold sirloin I'm not ashamed of, and there's an old Cheddar. I don't know if you could manage on that."

Boyes was quite sure he could manage on that. While luncheon was being prepared for him, he stepped across the road to Mrs. Elwood's store to buy cigarettes, the legend on the door showing that tobacco was one of the things she was licensed to sell.

Mrs. Elwood nearly fell over when Boyes entered the shop—at least, so it appeared to Boyes at first. Then he recognised that this was really a prehistoric form of the curtsey. He had intended to be five minutes in that store. He was there for thirty-five, and when he left, Mrs. Elwood was still talking.

Cigarettes? Yes, Mrs. Elwood had them. She knew she had them, for they come in of the Tuesday of the week before. No, she wouldn't tell a lie; it was not the Tuesday, but the Wednesday. And she'd took and put them somewhere where they'd be convenient. She couldn't say exactly where that was, but she'd be able to put her hand on them, if Mr. Boyes would kindly take a seat. He kindly took a seat. She fetched a Windsor chair in from the parlour, mounted on it, and explored an upper shelf. She took down a box marked "Gents' Half Hose," and seemed pained and surprised to find that it contained socks. She did a little better with an earthenware teapot; it did not contain any of the cigarettes that had arrived last week, but it did contain a small packet of what may once have been cigarettes. She blew violently upon it to remove the accretions of age, and laid it on the counter.

"Pre-War?" suggested Boyes.

"Well, they are old stock," said Mrs. Elwood truthfully; "but for that very reason, I should be willing to knock something off."

"Oh? Well, you'd better knock the blue mould off the ends of them. It gives the show away. Let me have a look at the new stock. Did you put them in the window, by any chance?"

"Well, if you've not said the actual word! It all comes back to me now. Of course I did."

So Boyes selected his favourite brand of cheap Virginians, left Mrs. Elwood still conversing, and returned to the inn for luncheon. He fared excellently and was waited upon by the landlord's pretty daughter, who possessed the lost art of blushing. After lunch he inspected a picturesque old church of architectural interest and also that very creditable waterfall. And then he rode back to London.

As a man he wished to keep Nesting to himself, admitting, perhaps, a few of his personal friends who might be worthy of it, and exacting from them pledges of secrecy. But Boyes was also a journalist, and the journalistic instinct was too strong for him. Three days later his article "The Loveliest Village in England" appeared in *The Daily Monitor*. It extolled Nesting to the skies. It praised "The Royal George," and the church, and the waterfall. It praised the inhabitants. And if it did not actually praise Mrs. Elwood, it said that the village shop and the old lady who presided over it were both unique, and should on no account be missed.

The article attracted several week-ends to Nesting. Boyes himself brought friends there. Edwin Sepal, R.A., arrived accidentally, but immediately made his arrangements with the landlord of "The Royal George" for a prolonged stay. Even if he was not the first of the pioneers, it is quite certain that his Academy picture in the following year fairly clinched the matter. All through the summer there was a continuous rush every week-end to Nesting. In the autumn the rush was considerably increased by myriads of Americans who wished to see the real thing, and admired enthusiastically in their own quaint language.

Meanwhile Nesting was perfectly aware that something was happening. It prepared to receive visitors and any money the visitors might have. The more important of its inhabitants gathered together and decided on a course of action. The landlord's daughter had a few blushing words to say on these occasions, and showed that there might be a good deal of business beneath the blush. You could not, even with a subsidy, keep a shepherd with a genuine smock and genuine crook sitting on the bench in front of "The Royal George" all day, and arrangements were made for an understudy. The same remark applied to the oldest inhabitant. You had to have an oldest inhabitant pottering about the place while visitors were there, because they

expected it. Several gentlemen aged from eighty to ninety agreed to keep the thing up properly.

subsequently decided to get it by post from Schoolbridge's. She equipped three little girls with three pet lambs, all led by a pale

blue ribbon, and she arranged for the lambs to be properly washed every Saturday morning. When an American saw a pretty child in a sunbonnet and daisy-chain, leading a white lamb by a pale blue ribbon, money came into Nesting, and, as the landlord's blushing



He was waited upon by the landlord's pretty daughter, who possessed the lost art of blushing."

And then Alice, the blushing daughter of the landlord, went into the pet lamb business. She also inquired the price of pale blue ribbon at Mrs. Elwood's, and

daughter observed, Nesting could do with it.

The banqueting-room at "The Royal George" was crowded now every week-end.

Alice decided that the price of luncheons should be raised, and it was raised. She decided further that the lane from the main road to Nesting should be made possible for motorists, and this was done. When Mrs. Elwood desired to put up an advertisement alongside the sign-post that said "To Nesting," Alice permitted it. There was one misspelling in Mrs. Elwood's advertisement, and Alice added two more to keep the enthusiasm rolling. The common tripper did not get on at all well at Nesting. He did not like the prices, and he said so. And he met with a cold and dignified surprise. Quite early in the season he gave up Nesting. It acquired its own special *clientèle*—people who had money to spend, did not mind spending it, and thoroughly enjoyed the early part of the nineteenth century. They always got it. Alice saw that they always got it, and even supervised the erection of an extremely old gallows by extremely modern labour. She taught the children of the village stories about that gallows, which they could repeat if asked. Yes, she was fairly busy. But she found time to laugh, and even to blush with Mr. Boyes, the journalist, occasionally.

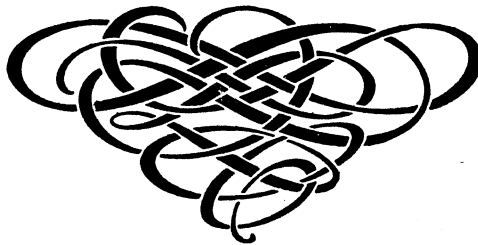
There was quite a good run for three years, and the thing has not died out yet. But it is very much diminished, and Mrs. Elwood is very much to blame. When Mrs. Elwood found that money was pouring in upon her, and that she could sell absolutely anything at almost any price, provided that she talked enough, her head became turned. She insisted on large plate-glass windows, on gilt letters that proclaimed Elwood's Emporium, and on absolutely competent assistants to take her place in the shop. She had never been interesting except as a curiosity, and nobody really wanted her in her commercial aspect. The pet lamb business became much overdone, and some sarcastic visitor

made remarks in print about the existence and exhibition of twenty-three pet lambs attached to twenty-three pale blue ribbons, and guarded by twenty-three pretty children in twenty-three sunbonnets.

Boyes had a serious talk with Alice and with the father of Alice. For three years London dealers had been foaming at the mouth in their mad eagerness to acquire the treasures of "The Royal George," and had been quietly told by the landlord that he wanted those treasures and did not want their money in the least. When a man does not want money, your only possible course is to offer him more of it. A sort of auction went on during those three years. At the end of them the landlord and his prospective son-in-law felt that the top note had been reached, and the dealers were allowed to take what they wanted at a price which made it unnecessary for Alice's papa to do any more work as long as he lived. He had had three very busy years keeping up the simple, old-fashioned village life in Nesting and taking the money for it, and he now sold the inn and retired to the comparative peace and quietude of the Fulham Road, London, S.W.

You can still go to Nesting if you like. But instead of Mrs. Elwood you will find Elwood's Emporium, and you will get what you want at too high a price, and with no compensatory conversation. At "The Royal George" you will find Italian waiters. The shepherd and his understudy have both died of drink. There are no pet lambs in the village, the profit of leading them about having been killed by excess. The waterfall is stopped up, and part of the church has fallen down. And nosy experts have examined the gallows and condemned it as a fake.

The worst of being discovered is that it never lasts. But neither Alice, nor Alice's father, nor Mr. Boyes is inclined to grumble about it.



THE MAN DOWNSTAIRS

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. WILMSHURST

"ANNE FAIRBAIRN," said Corinne, "you must be completely mad."
"Corinne Churton," returned Anne equably, "I don't see the necessity."

"But do you seriously mean to tell me that you propose to spend twenty-four hours as a parlourmaid to those impossible people simply to get local colour, as you call it?"

"Even so," answered Anne placidly. "It's not my fault. It's the fault of a certain John Rattray, whoever he may be. He writes alleged book reviews for *The Sentinel*. When 'The Gay Garden' was published, he said that my stuff would be a lot more convincing if I'd had some experience of the kind of life I was writing about. I won't let him say that twice. So, as it is necessary for me to know something about parlourmaids for the story I'm working on now, I'm going to *learn* something about them. *Voilà tout*."

"It sounds absolutely insane to me," said Corinne frankly. "What on earth does it matter what the man says? He's paid to say it. And, anyway, one night's experience won't be much good to you."

"It'll give me all I want," responded Anne confidently. "You'll see."

Corinne gathered up her personal belongings and rose to go. "Quite mad, I'm afraid," she said. "When will you be back?"

"To-morrow afternoon, I expect. The Potterthwaites are only taking me on as one of the extra hands for their dinner to-night. I'm to stay the night there. They don't know who I am, of course."

"Well," observed Corinne from the doorway, "if you live through it—which doesn't seem possible—don't forget my party to-morrow evening. *Au revoir*, my dear, and as much luck as you deserve."

* * * * *

In the dusk of the evening Miss Anne Fairbairn might have been observed to mount the steps of a stately and commodious residence within a hundred miles of the Marble Arch. She was aware of some slight

symptoms of nervousness, but, having put her hand to the plough, had no intention of taking it away again before the furrow was complete. She applied pressure to the bell, and was admitted by a butler of benign aspect. A few moments later she found herself, in company with two hired waiters and two hired parlourmaids, facing the slightly watery gaze of her employer.

Mr. Edward Potterthwaite had made his money during the War and out of boots. The boots were incredibly bad, but the money, of which there was a great deal, was perfectly good. So Mr. Potterthwaite, under the guidance of his wife, a large, ambitious female, shook the mud of Clapham from his feet and came to anchor again in a large old house on the north side of Hyde Park. It was a delightful house, and as suited to the Potterthwaites as a frock-coat to a 'bus-driver, but their ill-gotten wealth precluded any possibility of this being pointed out to them. To the very rich much, if not all, is forgiven.

To celebrate his arrival in this higher sphere Mr. Potterthwaite, abetted by his spouse, conceived the idea of a dinner-party, and issued a large number of invitations thereto. The better to ensure the smooth working of the feast, he proceeded to engage what he referred to as "temp'ry 'elp," in which category Anne, with the aid of a friendly agency, contrived an entry into the household.

Thus, some time before the opening of the revels, we may behold the "temp'ry 'elp" ranged uneasily in the hall to receive their final instructions from the master of the house. Mr. Potterthwaite would not have been Mr. Potterthwaite had he omitted this ceremony or delegated its execution to an underling.

"... And mind you," finished Mr. Potterthwaite on a note of warning, "no larks. You be'ave proper and I'll treat you proper. Can't say fairer'n that. But one thing I won't 'ave in this 'ouse, and that's larks. Now you run along."

They ran along.

To her relief, Anne found herself, in common with her fellow-hirelings, accepted by the permanent staff in a spirit of more or less friendly tolerance. Indeed, the butler, a patriarchal gentleman whom only the leanness of the times had forced to take service with such as the Potterthwaites, so far unbent as to outline her duties himself. It is possible that in so doing he was influenced by the fact that Anne was by far the most comely of the six mercenaries.

With the dinner itself we are not concerned. Suffice it to say that the company, composed entirely of persons who bitterly regretted the signing of peace, ate their way steadily down a vast list of unnecessary courses, passing by perceptible degrees from a condition of noisy loquacity to one almost of coma. Anne, rendering faithful service with various auxiliary dishes, marvelled that humans could eat so much and survive to eat yet more. She was conscious of a positive relief when at long last the orgy came to an end.

"You did very well," announced the butler graciously, when they had all gathered in the kitchen. "Very well."

"Thank you very much," returned Anne, sensible of that comforting inward glow which arises from a knowledge of good work well done.

Some time later, her duties accomplished, she made her way upstairs to the room allotted to her. This was a small apartment, little more than an overgrown cupboard, opening off the landing half-way up the stairs. She closed the door and sank gratefully into a chair. She felt very tired, but was reluctant to sleep while so many valuable impressions remained to be recorded. Taking out a notebook, she sat for a space in thought.

So far all had gone well and according to the programme, and she smiled faintly as she thought of the sceptical Corinne. Nevertheless, she would not be sorry to depart from this house, for she did not like the Potterthwaites. She began to write. . . .

It must have been at least an hour later that she first became aware of the sound. It came apparently from the room beneath her own, and reached her as a faint but undeniable crash. She lifted her head and listened; in a moment she heard the sound again.

Anne sat back in her chair and thought rapidly. It was much too late for any member of the household to be abroad upon any lawful business. She felt a little

thrill of excitement. Fear had no place in her composition, and the decision to investigate formed on the instant in her mind.

She rose, crept to the door, opened it softly and listened again. The noise was not repeated, but at the foot of the stairs a shaft of light was visible from beneath the door of the library.

For a brief space she paused in reflection, then carefully and silently descended on tip-toe to the hall below. Gaining the library door, she found it slightly ajar. Gingerly she applied her eye to the crack, holding her breath the while.

Standing with his back to her was the figure of a man—a tall man, apparently young, wearing a tweed coat and a cap pulled down over his eyes. She perceived that he had removed a large picture from the wall and was bending over it, working rapidly with some small instrument, presumably with the object of extracting the work of art undamaged from its frame.

Anne withdrew her eye and pondered swiftly. Her first impulse was to arouse the sleeping household, but to one of her adventurous tendencies that seemed too tame an ending to what might prove to be a vastly entertaining experience—an experience, moreover, that, competently handled, bade fair to yield a quantity of valuable copy. It is worthy of note that she was not in the least afraid of the burglar; she had never yet been afraid of any man, and did not propose to begin now.

Suddenly, as she stood revolving the situation in her mind, an inspiration, dazzling in its sheer audacity, flashed across her brain and left her gasping. Could it be done? Well, why not? She still wore her garb of servitude, and if only her nerve held—yes, it could and should be done. She smoothed her apron with a steady hand, pushed open the door, and walked into the room.

"Hullo!" she said.

The effect upon the burglar of this simple speech was all that she could have desired. He started violently, uttered a loud gasp, and whirled about to face her. Anne observed that he seemed not much over thirty, and possessed a massive chin, powerful hands, and an obviously muscular physique. Against her better judgment she found herself approving his appearance.

"Good Heavens!" he said. "I thought you'd all be asleep by this time!"

"I didn't suppose," retorted Anne crisply, "that you came here in the hope of finding

everyone awake to welcome you. What are you doing?"

The burglar grinned faintly and nodded to the picture. "Getting something I want."

Anne, summoning all her resolution, gazed at him for an instant in silence, took a pace towards him and lowered her voice.

"*Must* you push in like this and spoil the pitch for everyone else?" she said meaningly. The burglar started again, and his face assumed an expression of incredulous surprise.

"I don't understand. What——"

"You're not the only one who wants to do himself a good turn. Why choose *this* house to work in?"

The burglar's jaw dropped; blank disbelief was now writ large upon his features.

"You don't mean to say *you're* a——"

"Shut up!" said Anne fiercely. "You needn't shout it out and wake everyone up. Other people have got to make a living as well as you."

It must be admitted that Miss Fairbairn was now thoroughly enjoying herself. The idea of persuading the intruder to accept her as one of his own kidney had been a bold one, but it was apparently meeting with considerable success. It was her intention to extract from him as much information as possible concerning the habits, mode of life and methods of work obtaining in the underworld to which he belonged. The novelist in her was now completely in command. Gone was all thought of her duty to society and to her employer; she knew only that she had within her grasp a unique opportunity for securing rare and invaluable knowledge. Later, if the need arose, she could give attention to the question of his punishment; first she must make the fullest use of her chance. She became aware that her intended victim was regarding her with round eyes of wonder.

"It can't be possible," he said.

"Everything's possible," said Anne calmly. She advanced and took her seat upon a sofa. "You ought to have discovered that by this time. Who's working with you?"

For a little while the burglar was silent, surveying her thoughtfully. At length he shrugged his shoulders and smiled again.

"No one. I'm on my own. It's a lot safer."

"What made you come here?"

"Well, it's quite a sound neighbourhood. All these big houses are easy meat. As you

said, one must live. If it comes to that, why did *you* choose this place?"

"These people," said Anne, with perfect truth, "are rolling in money. Profiteers, too. One can't afford to miss a chance like that."

"No," said the burglar thoughtfully, "I suppose one can't. Look here, how long have you been at this game?"

"Not long."

"What made you take it up?"

"I might ask *you* that," said Anne.

"It's different for a man. It's no sort of life for a woman."

"Oh, isn't it?" retorted Anne. "I suppose you men think we're taking the bread out of your mouths. Well, you can spare some. Tell me—are *you* an old hand at it?"

"Hardly that," said the burglar. "You see, I only realised recently that there were opportunities in the profession. I'd always thought it must be very overcrowded. After to-night I shall think so again." He grinned amiably at her, and Anne was conscious of a spasm of remorse. Was it, after all, quite sportsmanlike to deceive him, criminal though he undoubtedly was? As she regarded his infectious smile, her behaviour seemed to take on all the appearance of a scurvy trick.

"You're not an ordinary sort of burglar," she said abruptly.

"If that's intended for a compliment," he answered, "thank you. If it isn't, I can only say that I hope to improve with practice."

"Public-school man, aren't you?" demanded his inquisitor.

"*Touché*," said the burglar.

"Why don't you go straight?"

"Why should I? One needs an incentive to do that."

"And haven't you one?"

"No," said the burglar. "At least, not yet. I might have one in a minute or two, perhaps."

"What do you mean?" said Anne.

"If you'll go straight," said the burglar, "I will. I can't say more than that, can I? I don't like the idea of your going wrong. Is it a bargain?"

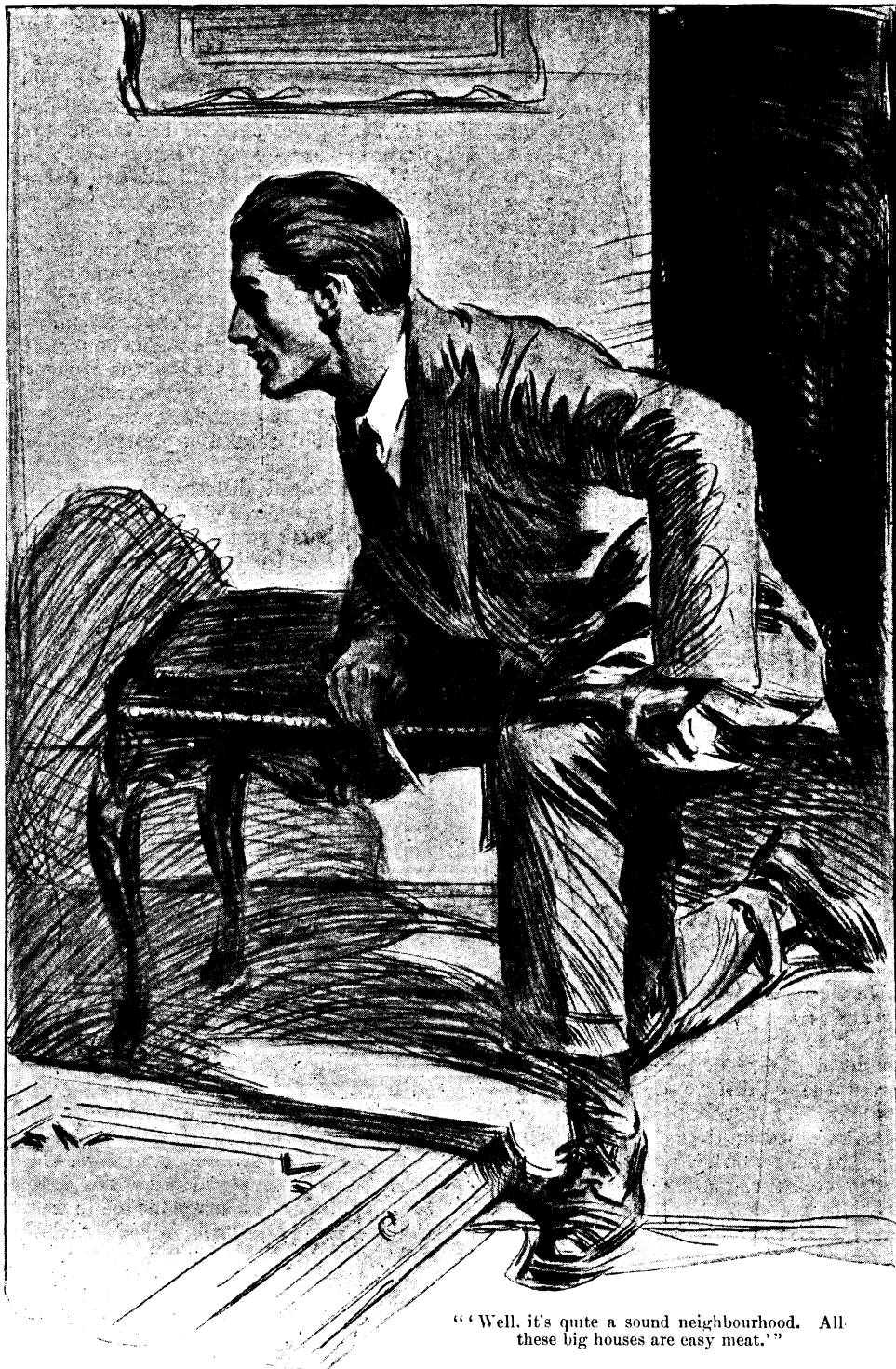
Anne said nothing. It seemed to her that the interview was not proceeding according to schedule. The control of the situation appeared to be passing from her hands to those of her intended victim. So far she had failed to glean any information of real worth, and the prospect of extorting any



“ ‘What made you come here?’ ”

grew increasingly remote. It was manifest that this amiable miscreant possessed a personality of considerable strength, and would reveal no more than he had a mind

to. His sudden proposal to reform opened up a new avenue of thought. If it were a genuine offer, would it not be a better and more worthy deed to turn her energies



“Well, it's quite a sound neighbourhood. All these big houses are easy meat.”

from the task of acquiring evil knowledge, and apply them to the moral duty of setting the feet of this black sheep once more upon the straight and narrow path?

She felt a little glow of righteousness at the thought. After all, it was obvious that he would be practically useless as a purveyor of local colour.

"Well," said the object of her meditations, "what about it?"

"What do you suggest?" asked Anne.

"I'll give up evil-doing and return to honest if unremunerative toil," explained the burglar with unction. "You've got a good job here. Stick to it. If you agree, let us both elevate our right hands and swear an oath."

There followed a slight pause.

"All right," said Anne. "But *I* must make up the oath." She had no mind to see herself sworn irrevocably to a life of domestic servitude with the Potterthwaites.

"Go ahead," said the burglar.

Anne raised her hand.

"I swear to abandon a life of crime and to devote myself hereafter to making an honest living in a lawful and respectable manner. Will that do?"

"Admirably," said the burglar. "You seem to have a gift for it." He swore in his turn with becoming solemnity. "Now I must go. I'm very glad I met you. Remember it's better to be an honest housemaid than a crooked countess. Shake on it."

He proffered a hand and Anne shook it gravely. The knowledge that this brand had been plucked from the burning by her own effort was very gratifying; she felt that she had justified her place in the scheme of things.

"I suppose I'd better put the picture back," remarked the brand cheerfully. He replaced the painting upon the wall and turned to the window. "You might shut this after me, will you? Thanks very much. Good night. I hope we'll meet again soon."

He thrust up the window, swung a long leg across the sill, and in a moment was gone. Anne, removing all trace of his visit, caught a glimpse of him striding briskly across the garden to disappear into the shadows. Thoughtfully she drew the curtains, switched out the light, and climbed the stairs to her room. . . .

The comforting sense of well-doing was still with her when she came down to breakfast later in the morning. It remained with her, in fact, until precisely nine o'clock, at which hour Mr. Potterthwaite, robed in a scarlet dressing-gown and a panic, entered the servants' hall after the manner of a projectile.

"Parkin!" gasped Mr. Potterthwaite. "Parkin!"

"Sir?" responded the butler with quiet dignity.

"Parkin, I've bin robbed! There's bin burglars 'ere! Don't you let no one leave the 'ouse till the police 'ave come!"

"Very good, sir," said Parkin the imperturbable.

Mr. Potterthwaite turned and departed like an avenging fury, a trail of curses lingering in his wake.

This evil news had upon Anne the effect of a severe blow from some blunt weapon. She was aware of a peculiar sinking feeling, and knew that she could not rest until she learnt the truth. To that end she proceeded to exercise her wiles upon the susceptible Parkin, urging him to go forth without delay in quest of tidings, which, in due course, he did, returning presently with the facts.

These proved distressingly simple. It appeared that Mr. Potterthwaite, being impelled by some portion of his morning mail to seek access to his safe, which was housed in a corner of the library, had discovered that it had been most skilfully opened and bereft of the valuable portion of its contents. There was missing also a quantity of portable silverware from the rooms upon the ground floor.

Thus Parkin to an awe-stricken audience. As the melancholy narrative drew to a close, a fierce rage began to grow up in Anne and burn within her like a flame.

So that smooth-faced, lying hypocrite had deliberately fooled her! Idiot that she was, not to have realised that his evil work might have been completed when first she came upon him; she had taken it for granted that she had interrupted the *beginning* of his operations. Even while he urged her to reform, spoke movingly of better things, and involved her in a futile oath, he must have been laughing in his sleeve at the knowledge that his pockets bulged with loot. No wonder that he had been so willing to reform, so eager to depart!

"Faugh!" said Anne, or as near to that strange word as she could manage. For a brief period she toyed with the temptation to betray the blackguard to Mr. Potterthwaite, but a moment's sane reflection exposed the perils of such a step. By so doing she must inevitably lay herself open to the gravest suspicion; it would be a task of no small difficulty to explain away her own actions during the night and her failure to arouse the household at the time. Anne's proud spirit quailed at the thought of attempting to explain to such as the Potterthwaites. No, she could do nothing

but pray for a second encounter with the perfidious intruder, when she might disclose a little of her opinion of his behaviour.

At mid-day, the police having arrived, examined, re-examined, drawn a number of conclusions, and exonerated the domestic staff from suspicion, Anne departed in good order from the house of Potterthwaite and betook herself to her flat, where she spent the next few hours in reviling herself for a gullible fool.

The passage of time brought no balm to her injured self-esteem, and she made ready for Corinne's party with the air of a convicted murderer dressing on the morning of his execution. The home of Miss Churton was close at hand, and in due course Anne, feeling that a little fresh air might be beneficial, descended to the street and walked briskly in that direction.

She had covered but half the distance when Destiny, ever willing to assist a good cause, took a hand in the game. Anne, rounding a corner, perceived a few yards ahead the figure of a man; as her eye fell upon him he paused beneath a lamp to light a cigarette. Something in his appearance struck a chord in Anne's memory; as she drew nearer she glanced casually at him. Then she gave vent to an audible gasp of pure amazement. It was the burglar.

He looked up quickly and his expression changed to one that matched her own.

"Great Scott!" he said.

With an effort Anne pulled herself together and surveyed him frigidly. He wore a dark overcoat and an opera hat, and seemed quite at his ease in them, but she supposed that they were merely designed to assist him in his nefarious work.

"I'm glad I've met you again," she began coldly. "I want——"

"Look here," he interrupted, "I don't understand, but I think you played rather a low trick on me. I was under the impression that you promised to go straight."

Anne, utterly taken aback, stared at him dumbly.

"I see by the evening paper that you got away with quite a big haul," pursued the burglar, warming to his theme. "Clever of you to open the safe. Equally clever of you to have made them all think it was done by outsiders. I suppose this is part of the proceeds." He waved a contemptuous hand at her clothes. "Well, I don't know who you are or what your game is now, but I congratulate you on the way you pulled my leg. Good night." He raised his hat,

executed an ironic bow, and swung upon his heel and away.

Anne remained for some time staring after him with the dazed expression of one under hypnotic influence. She felt completely dumbfounded; her brain declined to function. As in a dream she turned and slowly resumed her way.

At her destination the door was opened by Corinne herself.

"Hullo, my dear!" said she. "I am glad to see you alive again. After I read about your burglars in the evening paper, I was expecting to be asked to identify your corpse any minute. Come in and tell me all about it." Chattering rapidly, she guided Anne to the door of the drawing-room and ushered her in. "By the way, here's a surprise for you. I want you to meet John Rattray. John, this is Anne Fairbairn. She wants your blood. Anne dear, I didn't tell you John was a friend of mine, because I wanted to give you a shock. Go on—hit him! Hullo! There's the bell again!"

But Anne was paying no heed to her friend's cheerful babble. She was staring incredulously across the room to where, immaculate and entirely at his ease, stood the man from whom she had parted five minutes before. At sight of her his eyes and mouth opened in unison; he took a swift step forward and stopped, gazing at her. There followed a tense little pause.

Anne was the first to regain her poise.

"Before I go quite mad," she said, "would you mind telling me what you were doing in the Potterthwaites' house last night?"

"But what were *you*——" began the quondam criminal.

"What were you doing in the Potterthwaites' house last night, please?"

He hesitated, shrugged his shoulders, and smiled.

"Well, you see, it used to be my house. I sold it to them. My brother and I used to live there."

"Oh," said Anne. "But why——"

"Just after they moved in I had a letter from my brother, who's honeymooning in Italy. He's a romantic sort of bloke, and apparently he used to keep a bunch of love-letters behind that picture in the library. If—when, I mean—you meet him, you'll realise it's just the sort of thing he would do. A good soul, but eccentric. He was in a fearful state about it, and asked me to go and get 'em. It was rather awkward

for me, because the Potterthwaites had bought the place lock, stock and barrel, and they're not exactly the sort of people one could explain a thing like that to. Probably they'd have been rather objectionable about it."

"Probably," agreed Anne.

"So I thought the simplest way would be to nip in and get what I wanted without telling anyone. I knew it would be quite easy. I'd just got 'em when you turned up. Then I thought it would be very useful to me, in my journalistic capacity, if I could learn a few facts about crime from you. That's why I pretended. Then somehow it seemed a much better scheme to try and reform you. So I did. That's all. Now it's your turn."

"Good Heavens!" said Anne. "How extraordinary! Those were exactly my ideas, too." And she explained.

"By Jove!" said John Rattray, as she finished. "It was very sporting of you.

I seem to have been the cause of it, too. The real burglars must have been and left before I got there. I know I was rather surprised to find a window open." He paused and appeared to wrestle with some slight embarrassment. "I say, I'm awfully sorry I slated that book of yours. It wasn't——"

"Anne, darling," broke in the voice of their hostess, as she re-entered the room with a party of new arrivals, "what do you think? They've caught those burglars of yours already! Tony here's got a late paper. Nabbed them this afternoon. Quick work, I call it. John, you look very bucked about something. Have you forgiven him about that review, Anne?"

Anne, glancing at the ex-burglar, saw his gaze fixed upon her with a strained expectancy. To her surprise she found herself beginning to blush, and looked away quickly.

"Yes," she said.

Not long afterwards she proved it.



BRIXHAM: AUGUST NIGHT-TIME.

WHEN sundown fades to August dark,
And ranging planets fleck the tide,
The anchored fishers, bark by bark,
With kindled lamps in harbour ride—
Red-sailed and trim, from ocean sped
To Brixham quay by Berry Head.

And darkness hides the weathered strength
Of ashen quay and folded fleet,
And all the dim, enchanted length
Of climbing stair and twisted street,
And hides the red Devonian earth
That gave the Devon sea-kings birth.

And darkness hides from Brixham souls
The sea and its salt bitterness—
The fickle sea that moans and rolls,
The sea whose billows shoreward press,
And bear the living and the dead
To Brixham quay by Berry Head.

ERIC CHILMAN.



MOTOR-CYCLIST CAMPERS IN A SHELTERED CORNER OF AN ORCHARD, WITH "A" AND "COTTAGE" TENTS.

Photograph reproduced, by permission of Messrs. Iliffe, from "The Motor-Cycle."

CAMPING OUT AND THE ART OF "TRAVELLING LIGHT" HOW TO ENJOY AN OUTDOOR LIFE FOR A HOLIDAY

By HENRY J. STONE,

Author of "Camp-Touring and Light-Weight Camping"

Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above,
And the byway nigh me.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

THE old masters of road travel, whose impressions of Nature and the joys of the open air are stamped indelibly upon our minds, knew the secrets of "travelling light." With superior assurance we are inclined to think that this was because they knew not the blessings of motor transport; and here the tempter chuckles. We need not follow the great-hearted Robert Louis Stevenson and travel with a donkey for company, nor slavishly

copy robust Walt Whitman with his "rain-proof coat, good shoes, and a staff cut from the woods." But if we would gather the full harvest of the abounding wealth of beauty about us, we must know how to shed on occasion all except the bare essentials of life in their simplest form. Part of the purpose of this article is to indicate how to-day this may be accomplished without sacrifice of real comfort. Perchance, along the way, we may re-discover how delightful and charming an entertainer Nature is if, observing the rules of her royal household, we enter her secret chambers untrammelled and free.

When leisure offers us the opportunity to go holidaying, that entertainment is what we really seek. We think of the delight of sunlit seas, of clear blue skies, of the refreshment of green meadowlands, of quiet corners of the woodland with gentle-flowing streams, or of the tonic of high moorlands where the breeze blows free. We decide where best we can secure these delights, and then, in the majority of cases, deliberately cut out more than half of our available leisure by booking rooms at the nearest hotel or boarding-house.

Every artist knows—and there is something of the artist in everyone—that in order

her day and night. Once we have burnt our boats, that is a toll we pay cheerfully again and again.

But one must sleep and eat? Just so. To-day, if we will but learn the way of it, we may sleep in peace and security in a house so light and small that while it shelters us from the rude storms, it forms no barrier between us and the starlit sky, and we may cook simple meals on a kitchen equipment that a girl could carry many miles in her rucksack.

This is no romantic story, but to an increasing number of lovers of the open air a simple and practical solution of their



A "COTTAGE" TENT WITH FLY-SHEET.

Photograph reproduced, by permission of Messrs. Iliffe, from "The Motor-Cycle."

to get the choicest effects of Nature's charms he has to spend whole days and nights on the scene of his chosen subject. Mountain dwellers tell us that there is only one day in every year, and only a few moments of that day, when the mountain is at its best. There are natural effects that come so very rarely that, once missed, we may never see them again in a lifetime; like a golden sunset glow seen through golden corn on a swelling hill-top field. Nature has her psychological moments, and if we court her entertainment, we must be prepared to obey her unwritten rules. We must come to her lap free as children, undistracted by other cares, and watch with

problems—so simple and practical, in fact, that many have lost all sense of wonder at the achievement. They marvel only that anyone should question its application. "Travelling light," to-day, is no secret known only to a few of Nature's favourites: it is an open book to any who are not hopelessly spoiled by convention and artificiality. Modern light-weight camping has become almost a science—the science of the reduction of the weight and bulk of the simple essentials of life in the open air.

A SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT FOR "TRAVELLING LIGHT."

One of the accepted essentials of a peaceful

life is some kind of shelter from the wind and rain. In the accompanying illustrations three main types of light-weight tent are represented which the least informed on the subject will recognise from their names—the "Baby Bell," the "A," and the "Cottage." The others are modifications of these types. All the tents illustrated are rendered weather-proof, either by the steep pitch of the sides, as in the "A," or by a double roof (fly-sheet) which sheds the rain, as in the walled "Cottage." The "Baby Bell" weighs under two pounds, and its pole is a telescopic walking-stick

rather bulkier. The larger sizes will provide shelter for two, and this pattern is used frequently by pedestrian and cyclist campers in pairs, to whom small weight and bulk are questions of great importance. The weight is then shared, and therefore the individual "burden" is even less than that carried by the single camper using the "Baby Bell." The floor-space of the "A" tent is 6 feet 6 inches by 3 feet 4 feet 6 inches.

Where greater headroom and floor-space are desired, and the small extra weight and bulk are of no great importance, the vertical



"BABY BELL" AND "COTTAGE" TENTS IN A WOODLAND SETTING.

weighing, with metal ferrule, only 8 ounces. It covers a floor-space of 7 feet 6 inches by 3 feet 9 inches, has a "gate" which fastens with press buttons, and a hood to secure ventilation without draught. Its roof can be adjusted to varying conditions simply by screwing the internal section of the pole. In short, it is an efficient little house which a lady may carry without fatigue on the back, or a man in his pocket. How these reductions of weight and bulk are attained without loss of efficiency will be considered later.

The "A" tent in the smaller sizes is about the same weight as the "Baby Bell," but, having two poles (in sections), is

walled "Cottage," or some slight modification of it, forms a more "desirable" temporary residence. With even a short wall, either the slope of the roof must be reduced or the height increased. The latter is undesirable for several reasons, and to render the "Cottage" weather-proof, a double roof is resorted to—a fly-sheet weighing an additional two to three pounds. This makes possible the extension of the walls to 3 feet or more, while the protection of the fly-sheet renders available for use in all weathers every square inch of the floor-space. The floor-space of the "Cottage" is from 6 feet 6 inches to 9 feet by from 5 feet to 8 feet 6 inches.

Lest these spaces appear somewhat cramped to the inexperienced, it is well to remember that the camper is very rarely confined to his tent except to sleep at night, when generally it is a question of the cosier the better. At other times he makes use of shade, sunshine, and the shelter of rocks and trees, as the mood of Nature at the moment dictates.

Here, then, we have the different types of habitation available if we wish to "travel light" and "eat and sleep with the earth." It has been implied that the chief function

light" hinges. It is well to have clearly in mind that every single article we carry requires a certain amount of cleaning, repair, and packing every time we move camp. These are the distractions which in our search for the welcome of Nature we should be careful to avoid. A camp is not a makeshift house: it is a little home adapted to its natural environment. Each will decide for himself (or herself) what is an aid and what a hindrance to the free enjoyment of camp life. It may assist in arriving at a decision to remember that



STOVE, WIND-SCREEN, COOKING-POT WITH FRYING-PAN LID, WATER BUCKET, WASH BOWL, ETC.

of the tent is to provide a shelter and protection during sleep. The word "sleep" conjures up pictures of heavy bedsteads, mattresses, endless blankets and sheets and pillows, and the rest of the conventional sleeping equipment. It is possible, of course, to purchase light folding canvas bedsteads suitable for camping, and with a motor-car as the means of transport there would be no difficulty in carrying them. But the question is still open for decision whether such furniture should not be dispensed with. It is around just such questions as these that the whole problem of "travelling

almost invariably those who have passed through the first novelty of camping, and have found lasting satisfaction in the life, eat and sleep on the ground. It is possible to judge the extent of a camper's experience by the number of times you discover him wandering about for a seat when all around is the soft, warm turf.

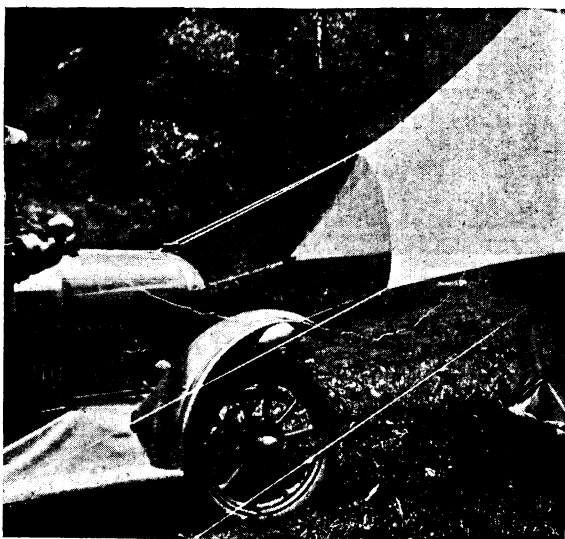
"TO EAT AND SLEEP WITH THE EARTH."

The first essential of slumber comfort is a dry couch. Light-weight campers find security in the rubber-proofed ground-sheet covering the *whole* floor of the tent.

Thus equipped, we may sit in safety anywhere in the tent. The ground-sheet of the "Baby Bell" weighs about $1\frac{1}{4}$ lbs., of the "A" about 1 lb., and of the "Cottage" from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 lbs.

Because rubber-proof material is somewhat uninviting to the touch, a ground-blanket is desirable in addition to the ground-sheet. For the lighter tents this is of cashmere in cosy, warm colours, and weighs from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 lb. For motor camping a travelling rug serves well in this capacity. Further comfort is sometimes secured by the use of dry bracken or clean straw beneath the ground-sheet, but the hardened camper generally would rule this out as not worth the trouble.

Loose blankets, except for the ground, are found to be a cumbersome and uneconomical use of bulk and weight: a sleeping-bag, because it retains the warmth, is infinitely preferable. Down sleeping-bags give the maximum comfort for the minimum of bulk and weight, and can be made quite easily from an old quilt—preferably with a valance—fitted with small press fasteners at intervals along the edge of the down filling. Fleece blanket material is also very



TENT LIGHTING OFF THE CAR BATTERY (SHOWING WIRE CONNECTING LAMP IN ROOF OF TENT).

Photograph reproduced by permission of "The Motor."

cosy, but bulks and weighs rather more, and lady campers frequently add a silk-lined hood. In practice, more than a good sleeping-bag is seldom necessary for slumber comfort, but it is advisable even in summer to take precautions against early morning frosts by having handy an additional cover.

For pillow, a tiny down cushion about

9 inches square placed on folded garments is sometimes used for light-weight camping, but where bulk is a consideration a clean piece of linen laid over the softer garments is considered adequate. An additional cushion as a protection for the hip usually insures comfort on the most hostile ground. Generally, of course, it is possible to avoid rough and stony sites for the tent. Lighting the tent at night may be arranged by running



THE WALKING-STICK POLE, WITH A SECTION OF AEROPLANE SPAR OUT OF WHICH IT IS CONSTRUCTED.

a wire off the electric system of a car, as in the accompanying picture, or with an acetylene set or lamp.

There remains the question of food as the third and last of our essentials for life in the open air. Much, of course, will depend on personal tastes and habits in this connection, but in general the more we are engrossed in the life about us, the less are we inclined to bother with the preparation of elaborate meals. There are



A "COTTAGE" TENT FOR TWO, WITH POLES READY FOR TRANSIT.

camp where the preparation of meals fills the major portion of every day, and others where life is so vastly interesting in other directions that meals form a necessary distraction to be disposed of as expeditiously as possible. A good stove, a set of light cooking-pots made to "nest" one in the other and fitted with detachable or folding handles, with the usual picnic outfit, are sufficient for this purpose.

There are few things about camp more charming and picturesque than a log fire; but except in large fixed camps, where it is possible to keep a stock-pot and big kettle going, it will be found that the log fire is best confined to its happy function of supplying a cheerful meeting-place for evening song and story. Where dissolved acetylene is used for the lighting system of a car, it may be convenient to use this, with a suitable burner and ring, as the heating plant. Failing this, for light-weight camp cookery use one of the stoves which carry their own fuel, and will cook even in a gale of wind. Their only weakness, for the purposes of outdoor cooking, is extreme sensitiveness to draught during the starting process. Carefully nursed through this stage, they will cook almost anything, and, with the aid of a square of fine wire gauze, will toast, or act as heat radiator in cold weather. A wind-screen, as shown in one of the accompanying illustrations, sheltering the stove and cooking-pot on three sides, helps to protect the flame against gusts of wind.

Water buckets and wash bowls for light-weight camping are made in canvas, the former, of 3-gallon capacity, weighing about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. and the latter about 5 ozs. Teapots are rendered unnecessary by the use of muslin bags for tea infusing, and these have the advantage over the teapot in the fact that they can be withdrawn immediately the tea is "made." The remainder of the camp kitchen will suggest itself.

POSSIBILITIES OF "TRAVELLING LIGHT."

With such a light and simple camp outfit in mind, the reader quite unacquainted with camping should be able to visualise its possibilities. Before considering this aspect of our subject, I imagine many will be interested to know how the reductions of weight and bulk already indicated have been attained.

The 2 lb. "Baby Bell" is constructed

of the finest cotton fabric, resembling lawn or fine cambric, reinforced with double thickness at all points of strain, and strengthened at the edges with tape. The two lines are of fine fishing-cord, and for pegs either meat skewers or stout aluminium wire are used. Either of the latter answer well for all light tents on average soil, but stronger pegs or vine staples may be necessary for the larger and heavier types. The walking-stick pole is of aeroplane spar, lighter and stronger than bamboo, of which light tent poles are usually constructed. The shortage of bamboo during the War led to the invention of cylindrical two-ply for aeroplane spars, and this material has now been pressed into



PEDESTRIAN TENT (2 LBS.) AND WALKING-STICK POLE (8 OZS.).



COMPLETE OUTFIT FOR TWO ON CYCLE.

peace-time service for light-weight tent poles.

The poles of the other tents are jointed like fishing rods, and pack with the wind-screen in a fishing rod case. The heaviest weigh in bamboo about $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. The wind-screen shown in one of the accompanying illustrations is an excellent example of weight and bulk reduction, being constructed of four umbrella ribs and $\frac{1}{2}$ yard of fine cotton fabric, weighing less than 3 ozs.

The advantage of down sleeping-bags over loose blankets will be realised when it is remembered that one blanket may weigh from 4 to 7 lbs., and a down sleeping-bag from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 lbs. for less than half the bulk. Two or three of the former are of doubtful utility, while the latter protects the body

effectively from both air above and ground-cold beneath. The complete set of three cooking-pots with frying-pan lid shown in use in our picture weigh together only 1 lb. Sliders for tent lines are made in sheet brass or aluminium, and a dozen weigh about 2 ozs.

THE LURE OF HIGHWAY AND BYWAY.

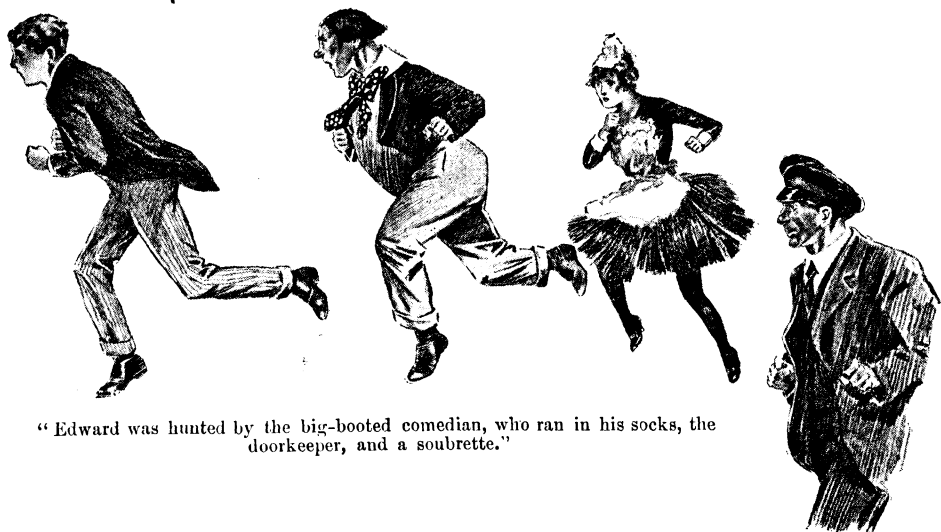
What are the possibilities of the camping outfit here described? Part of the answer is revealed in the accompanying pictures. The light-weight camp outfit, rightly constructed, is adaptable for holiday or week-end camping on a one-place site. But the chief fascination and charm of camping is its freedom, and freedom implies the power to move the whole camp at short notice to that inevitable and much more desirable site "over the hill." It implies the ability to answer the lure of highway and byway without care or question. At once the importance of the simplicity and small bulk and weight of our outfit is apparent. We are free to adapt the camping notion to the walking tour, to the cycling tour, to motor touring, to canoeing—in fact, to a whole variety of hobbies and pursuits. Even if we follow none of these hobbies, if we are just lovers of beauty, seeking to live a while in a natural and picturesque environment, the simpler and lighter our equipment, the more surely we shall attain the end we have in view.

In almost every corner of Britain there are ideal camping sites awaiting those who have learnt the art of "travelling light": quiet and sheltered glades deep in the forest, with the delightful music of running water; lochside lawns, with the great

mountains and their ever-changing lights in all directions; moorland sites where the air is spiced with myrtle, and the great rolling hills lift us a while out of all petty things. Everyone will recall some such remembered spot where he or she has longed to spend whole days and nights. However beautiful the scenes we know, it is fairly certain there are others equally good elsewhere. Camping, and camp-touring especially, will lead us out to them, once we have learnt the way of it. Nor is the finding of fresh sites along the way as difficult a task as might be imagined. There are parts of Scotland—and of the west of Ireland in normal times—where, for the asking, camp sites may be had with all those desirable features already indicated.

We all incline to the idea that health is very largely a matter of fresh air and good food. Both, undoubtedly, are important, but camping, in the sense here described, will teach us that these form only two out of many factors that make for health. Our broken nerves and other disorders are very frequently the signs of starvation, not from lack of the right food, but of lack of colour, of close association with living, growing things, with the trees and the sunlight and a hundred other subtle healing forces which Nature, given the opportunity, knows how to bestow generously. The camp provides the opportunity. The writer has seen, not once, but many times, tired and listless city folk transformed, as by a miracle, into different beings within the space of a few days in the quiet of a woodland camp. There were more and subtler things at work in the accomplishment of that miracle than fresh air and food.





"Edward was hunted by the big-booted comedian, who ran in his socks, the doorkeeper, and a soubrette."

EDWARD'S BENEFIT

By B. A. CLARKE

Author of "A Free Hand," "Minnows and Tritons," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HUTTON MITCHELL

WHEN Edward West, his beautiful voice having broken, was sacked from St. Jude's choir, he blamed the organist's wife. There was no evidence of her having acted against him, but he "felt in his bones" that it was her work, which seemed conclusive. Otherwise I would have withstood him, having been attracted to Mrs. Vowkes by her way of talking so fast as to cause her a catch in her breath, and then colouring up and laughing at herself, and also by her voice lozenges, by which no one has more benefited than Edward. But while accepting the testimony of my friend's bones, I saw that he went too far in complaining that "that woman" had ruined his life, because what had wrecked it was not his dismissal from our choir, but the cracking of his treble voice that had won him such great fame. Since the age of eleven he had been a celebrity, and he simply couldn't rest as no one in particular, which turned his thoughts to music-halls and made him a "professional" comedian, the "professional" meaning no more than that he was prepared to take any fees he

could get. Becoming a comedian, he became at the same time many other splendid things, how many I didn't suspect until he showed me his professional card, which ran—

WALT WESTMORELAND,
Society Entertainer and Descriptive
Humorist.

The Only Black Clown
and Bone King.

My friend said there were comedians drawing a hundred pounds a week who made lesser claims. This card appeared week after week in *Vaudeville Topics*, and that no engagements resulted he attributed to "the notorious music-hall ring." Edward said either he would break the ring or the ring would break him, and he thought the ring would go first. When this happened there would be engagements galore for him, and he must be ready for them with an exclusive repertoire, because it would be fatal to have amateurs singing his songs and claiming that they sang them better. He said I knew what amateurs were. As a matter of fact,

I didn't, but I replied that if they were such cads as that, he couldn't be too careful.

In getting songs written for his sole use Edward was fortunate in finding poets who were also musicians or *vice versa* (*vice versa* means the other way about), and, thus cutting out a fee, was able to get them done for five shillings each, except the famous "knot" song, for which he paid as much as seven and six. In this way he spent all that he had saved of the concert fees that had been earned so easily in the days of his fame as a treble, leaving nothing for properties, which therefore had to be improvised. During the day Edward was employed at a solicitor's to fog for the artied clerks. From one of these he now begged a discarded topper for use in the "knot" song, and persuaded a friendly house-painter to give it a thick coating of green paint.

About this time a real professional engagement came to him to sing at a South London Athenæum which had not heard of his loss of voice, and where two years before he had sung a half-dozen songs illustrating a lecture by old Vowkes on Byrd, Bull, and Orlando Gibbons. The present engagement was at a concert of chamber music, with Edward as the only vocalist. As he carefully refrained from sending up the titles of his songs, he appeared twice on the programme thus: "Selected—Master Edward West." They sent one complimentary ticket only, and that came to me. The concert opened with Beethoven's Septet. Judging that after this the audience would need rousing, Edward brought forward his seven-and-sixpenny "knot" song from the second part. His appearance in a grass-green top hat roused them certainly, and when between the verses he strutted round the platform, smirking and raising the green hat to imaginary conquests in various parts of the hall, there was the appalling silence of a thousand horrified souls painfully wide-awake. The secretary showed his appreciation of Edward's selective powers by cancelling his second offering without asking what it was.

Edward attributed his "comparative failure" to his hat being the wrong colour, had it repainted sky-blue, which he tried at a smoker where he was "kindly waiving his usual fee," and when it failed there, had it repainted scarlet. Other failures were recorded in fresh coatings of paint, until the property hat became so heavy as to be almost unliftable.

Rumours began to circulate about Mrs.

Vowkes—that she had only one lung, which, it seemed, was less than the proper number. Old Vowkes became unbearable at the choir practices, which isn't his nature, and as he had always been very decent to me, I told him one evening what I had heard, and said if Mrs. Vowkes suffered from any shortage of lungs, I was very sorry for it, and hoped she would incur no bad consequences. He put his arm on my shoulder.

"You have a kind heart, Charley. I am glad to say things are not so bad as you suggest. In my dear wife's right lung there is one spot—only just a small spot, you understand, a very tiny spot——"

"Yes, sir?"

And then, for all the spot being so tiny, he broke down utterly. "We are so happy together, Charley. I have always feared my happiness was too great to last."

Edward, on my telling him of this, became very thoughtful.

"I have always wished to do good to an enemy, as we are told to, and now is my chance if I can find out how to bless a woman with a spotted lung."

"When my Aunt Susan was threatened with consumption, it was kept off by a winter in the Engadine."

"I don't know where the Engadine is," said Edward, "but Mrs. Vowkes shall winter there at my expense."

To my amazement, a fortnight later he told me the thing was as good as done.

"The difficulty," said he, "was raising the funds, and this I have met by arranging to give myself a benefit. Strictly, it should come at the end of my professional career, and provide for my old age. Everyone ought to provide for his old age. My Uncle Simon always mentions this duty when asked to help anyone else; but I don't think there is anything about it in the Bible, certainly not nearly as much as there is about doing good to one's enemies. Anyway, I have decided to take my benefit now and give all I get to patching up Mrs. Vowkes's right lung. I have hired the Apollo at Dockford, because it is the only hall that did not insist on having the rent in advance."

The Apollo (which mustn't be confused with the Dockford Music Hall, a much grander place altogether) had the further advantage of being near two huge factories. An *ex-employé* at Green's Green Pickles, Cyril Dayle, V.C., was known to be casting longing eyes upon the music-hall stage, and Edward, who knew him through having appeared four years before at the Dockford

Music Hall in a concert got up to start the V.C. in business, had suggested to him that if he appeared in professional company and scored the success of the evening, the halls would be open to him.

Edward argued that just as Dockford had bought tickets in 1918 to set him up in business, they would now to open the music-halls to him. Edward had put it very straight to Dayle that he couldn't expect to hold his own with professionals unless he got the house absolutely packed with his friends. The V.C. thought he could do this. Green's would roll up to his support to its last man and girl, and the future Mrs. Dayle, the most popular *employée* of Black's Blacking, would answer for that giant factory. He asked that special bills should be printed for display at the factories, giving the greatest possible prominence to his name.

"Cheek," said I, "when it is your benefit. What did you say?"

"Told him to print his own bills and tickets, too, and send me the bill. Of course, it is rather rotten playing second fiddle at my own benefit, but it means a lot more for my enemy, Mrs. Vowkes. It looks like being a money-maker, doesn't it?"

It certainly sounded very promising.

Soon Edward could show me a handbill with his own professional name, Walt Westmoreland, very large, and other names much smaller, which he said was the regular thing. I was surprised to read that these others were world-famous artists who were giving their services because of their life-long attachment to Walt Westmoreland and their admiration of his genius.

Edward explained that this was mere eyewash. Except Cyril Dayle, all had to be paid; but the "resting" members of the profession had a reduced scale of charges for *bona fide* benefits, and certainly he had been let in upon the ground floor. For example, "Lancashire Lucas," the clog dancer, came as a friend for an honorarium of seven and six.

"What," asked I "would he charge a mere acquaintance—a hundred pounds?"

"Please don't mock, Charley, when my whole chance of doing good to an enemy depends upon my making a hit in this. So far things couldn't have gone better. Nearly every artist I approached met me like a perfect brick, and even the two who tried to take advantage of me caved in when they saw I knew my way about. The Scotch Contralto (sentimental) opened

her mouth very wide, but I beat her down to five shillings and cab fares, and Mahomet Cassim, the refined sword-swallower, to eight shillings and a bottle of beer. Two serio-comic sisters are coming for nine shillings the pair, and a big-booted comedian for ten shillings (they always run high). Altogether, exclusive of myself and Dayle, there is an all-star programme of twelve specialities for four pounds fifteen, which would have been less but for the necessity of having at least one animal turn, and the hiring of Professor Palmer's highly trained hedgehogs for thirty shillings. Oh, Charley, isn't it a wonderful list?"

Honestly I thought it was. Never having been trusted to arrange anything for myself, I admired Edward more than ever for his resolute handling of such high matters. Where should I be if a Scotch contralto opened her mouth too wide? Nowhere. I should be helpless as a baby. I pointed to a name at the foot of the handbill which had been given a whole line to itself, two lines, if you count the separating "and."

and

Mulatto Joe, the Half-breed Nightingale.

"I expect you have to pay that fellow pretty well—how much?"

"Nothing, Charley. He is my friend, the only real friend I have ever had."

"Dear Edward, am I that friend?"

"Who else, Charley?"

"Oh, I am so glad and proud. Of course I'll sing at your benefit for nothing. But why must I be a mulatto?"

"Because the only idea these people have of beautiful song is 'Listen to the Mocking Bird,' and it must be sung in character by some sort of coon."

"Whatever you say, Edward, goes," said I, admiring him so much at the moment that I would have consented to anything.

November 11 was the grand night. I had to find the Apollo by myself, Edward having gone there straight from his article clerks to ensure the last lick and polish being given to all preparations. I experienced great difficulty in finding the hall, which wasn't on Dockford High Road, but three hundred yards up a tributary side-street, with the result that instead of arriving shortly after seven to be made up early, leaving Edward free afterwards to welcome artists (or is it artistes?), I did not sight the gas transparency "Apollo Hall of Varieties" until right on eight, the hour for starting. The doors were open, but no one was going in. A surly door-keeper

directed me to the stage door, which opened on an unlighted footway that ran between the Apollo and the playground wall of a board school. Pushing it open, I was faced by a very narrow staircase lit by one gas-jet, unburnered. At the top was the green room, where I found Edward at bay, surrounded by angry performers made up for the stage, and a plausible man in a tail-coat, who, I discovered, was the landlord.

"Come, Mr. Westmoreland," he was saying, "I have to leave, and so I must trouble you to pay me the rent now. These ladies and gentlemen you can pay later out of the takings at the door."

"Tikin's!" screamed a gaunt woman. "There's not goin' to be any tikin's. The show's a wash-out. There ain't twenty people in the 'all, and they're complimentary. If the young gent has any money, it's share and share alike. You're not goin' to be pied off first, not on your sweet life!"

Edward tried to soothe her.

"My dear madam" (this, I learnt afterwards, was the Scotch Contralto, sentimental), "you are making a fuss about nothing. Everyone will be paid in full after the first part. Haven't I told you all that the most popular man in Dockford, Cyril Dayle, is bringing a hallful with him? They will be here in a few minutes. It isn't eight yet."

"It's five past," said a man with vermilion wig and nose, and cardboard boots thirty inches long; no doubt the big-booted comedian, who was showing his lifelong admiration for Edward by appearing for ten shillings. "For all we know, this

Dayle business is hot air. When does he come on?"

He snatched a programme.

"There you are—number one in each part—'Cyril Dayle, V.C.: Selected.' Then why isn't he here?"

An angry babel arose: fists were shaken under Edward's nose, women stretched out claws like cats. Edward faced them without



"The most popular man in Dockford, Cyril Dayle, is bringing a hallful. They will be here in a few minutes. It isn't eight yet."

flinching, a little pale, but oh, he was brave! And then he caught sight of me and did a splendid thing. Himself threatened so frightfully, he could take steps to secure my safety. If these people knew we were chums, I might be involved in his punishment as an accomplice.

"Yes, sir?" he said to me. "What can I do for you?"

"If you please, I am Joe the Nightingale," said I, suppressing the "Mulatto" for fear

they should think less of me for not keeping it up in private life. "I have come to sing for Mr. Walt Westmoreland. Can you direct me to him?"

Accepted by these angry artists as one

Almost immediately my chance came. The landlord beckoned me aside.

"Would you mind taking this key and locking the stage door you have just entered by? Our slippery friend here is meditating a bolt; one can read it in his eye. It isn't safe for me to leave him alone with these people. They might get money out of him to which I have a prior claim."

"Certainly," said I, accepting the key. Leaving the room, I caught Edward's eye.

At the street door I



"'It's five past,' said the big-booted comedian. . . . 'For all we know, this Dayle business is hot air. When does he come on?'"

of themselves, I racked my brains for some way of turning this to my friend's rescue.

stood, fumbled with the key in the lock, but of course didn't turn it (I am not quite mad), and didn't have to say I had.

"Is it all right?" asked the landlord, receiving back the key.

"Quite," said I, and indeed it was—for us.

He winked at the artists (or artistes). Evidently the knowledge of his precautionary measure was public property. And then some, who had been keeping between Edward and the door, moved away as if carelessly. The unspeakable cads wished him to make a dash for liberty, so that before manhandling him they might gloat over his despair, caught like a rat in a trap against the locked street door.

Edward's eye sought mine: I nodded violently. He was out of the room so suddenly that even I was startled. There was no pursuit, only a clustering over the banister of painted faces inflamed with cruel anticipation, which rose to a taunting yell when Edward touched the door-handle. I don't know what they did when the door opened to him, for I was racing downstairs for my life. Yes, for my life! You didn't see their faces.

Edward was waiting outside for me, prepared, if I didn't emerge, at once to return for me.

"Opposite ways, Charley!" he gasped, and was off at a speed that promised escape. I obeyed him, hoping to escape by my unimportance.

But the landlord, who was first out, made a fast pack and a slow, despatching, as they emerged, those whose figures suggested pace after Edward, and the others after me. Edward was hunted by the big-booted comedian, who ran in his socks, Lancashire Lucas, the door-keeper and a soubrette; I by Mahomet Cassim, the refined sword-swallower, the Scotch Contralto, the landlord and the serio-comic sisters, with Professor Palmer, carrying his highly-trained hedgehogs, as whipper-in.

From the first Edward and I had the legs of them; but the unlit deserted back streets, where the chase started, were bounded by garish high-roads, into which we dare not emerge for fear of the hue and cry, so there was nothing for it but to keep in this parallelogram of darkness until we had run our pursuers to an absolute standstill. In a maze of mean streets and crazy alleys (not a blind alley amongst them, luckily), we ran and walked and ran again, taking nearly every turning that offered, never far from one another, sometimes running almost abreast in the parallel streets. Often I was nearer to Edward's pursuers than to

my own. Once I found myself overtaking them, an awkward predicament, because, at the moment, the serio-comic sisters had me in view, and in answer to their screams the fast pack, in a most unsporting way, faced round to stop me. I must have been caught if Edward, who had run so fast to lose touch with his hounds, had not appeared round a turning fifty yards ahead, racing *towards* us. He turned at once, but the view halo had been given, and I was forgotten completely, even the serio-comic sisters being drawn away after nobler quarry. My other chasers, now straggling into sight, however, continued to trail me.

And now the packs began to thin out, and soon the parallelogram was strewn with vaudeville wreckage, panting against railings, or sitting gasping for breath upon kerbstones. They took no notice of me even when I passed them at a walk. The Scotch Contralto was still going, animated, presumably, by the hope that sooner or later I should overlap her. I heard no other sound, not even Edward's footfalls. No doubt he had left the parallelogram, as I must also, making for the Dockford High Road. I passed Professor Palmer seated on a doorstep, counting his hedgehogs.

But I wasn't to reach Dockford High Road yet, for a whole crowd surged from it towards me, headed by Edward and an arm-in-arm couple, whom I rightly guessed to be Cyril Dayle and his sweetheart. What a tale they had to tell! It seemed that Dayle's own benefit having taken place at Dockford Music Hall, he had got it into his head that Edward's was to be there, and had had his bills and tickets printed accordingly, stating further that the hour of starting was nine, Dockford Music Hall being a two-shows-a-night hall, and benefits being invariably given the second house. He and Miss Long, his young lady, had sold a prodigious number of tickets, and there had been a great scene of confusion at the Dockford, but a number of volunteers were now at the entrances sending our people along to the Apollo.

"Perhaps we shall find it locked up," said I blankly.

But the telephone had put this right. There remained the reassembling of the artists, and Dayle secured this, like the resourceful soldier he was, some followers being despatched at a run to guard the outlets from the parallelogram, others to scour the dark streets and alleys inside it. Broken-winded vaudevillists were gathered from the most

unlikely spots, Mahomet Cassim being discovered asleep in an area.

The curtain went up at nine to a packed audience. Everything went with a bang, and nothing better than Edward's "knot" song. When he promenaded between the verses, lifting his hat (gamboge now) to his imaginary flames, kisses were blown to him from the directions he thus honoured, and he was given a double encore. Which proves he had been right all along in maintaining that the seven-and-sixpenny exclusive song was a winner if he could get his top-hat the right colour. Even Cyril Dayle, who, of course, was the great smoke in that house packed with his friends, didn't go beyond a double encore. By any impartial audience he would have been given "the bird."

I got an encore, but so did many others; indeed, it would save time to mention those that didn't—Professor Palmer, of course, his turn being so long; the Scotch Contralto, who didn't recover her breath all the evening; and Mahomet Cassim, either because people thought that he had swallowed as much sword as was good for him, or because Dockford found his refined sword-swallowing act too refined.

But I must tell you about the big-booted comedian. His name was Cogers, and he turned out to be a most jolly man and not too refined for anywhere. You may remember that he chased Edward in his stockings. When Professor Palmer emerged from the hall he tripped over Mr. Cogers's cardboard boots, which had been left just inside the door, and fell, spilling three of his hedgehogs. He saw two and retrieved them, but the third escaped unnoticed, the Professor not discovering his loss until, the chase abandoned, he sat down on a doorstep to count them. The lost hedgehog was little Albert, but the Infant Phenomenon, a mere baby, but the most highly trained of them all. The poor man cried and cried. When Mr. Cogers came on to the platform now, he tripped over his own feet (one of his most original effects, Edward says) and then gave a yell and dragged off his right boot. Holding it upside down, he shook it, and out dropped—Albert. Oh, what a scene it was, laughter that shook the roof giving place to deafening applause when Professor Palmer, with Albert in his hand, kissed Mr. Cogers on both cheeks. The spilled hedgehog must at once have run into the boot and hidden in a large swelling over the big toe, an enormous comic bunion, and gone to

sleep there until the comedian's stumble aroused him. You never saw anyone so funny as Mr. Cogers became. He kept breaking off his songs to empty out his boots. At other times he would scratch himself and then send the accompanist off to ask Professor Palmer to count his hedgehogs again.

It was a splendid entertainment, and what do you think was the net profit? (Net means after you have paid all expenses.) £59 14s. 6d.

The following evening we took this round to the Vowkeses. Edward said he had got up an entertainment in a distant part of London to pay the cost of curing a consumptive lady (whose name was never mentioned) by sending her to the Engadine. Every word of this was true, and if the Vowkeses inferred from these true words that the money wasn't just a present from Edward, we couldn't help it, could we? Mr. Vowkes was very glad of the money, and he didn't pretend he wasn't; but in another way he disappointed us. We had gone round to gloat over his delight, as you do over that of some birthday hero to whom you have given an extra swanky birthday present. But instead of showing us his great joy, the organist began to tremble, and ran out of the room. Of course he thanked Edward tremendously afterwards. Mrs. Vowkes disappointed us permanently. Having heard so much about heaping coals of fire on enemies' heads without ever having seen it done, we were very curious as to how persons who had coals heaped on them took it. Mrs. Vowkes wasn't conscious of coals of fire. Instead, she declared she would rather this had come from Edward than from anyone, because he had always been her favourite.

"Then why did you have him turned out of the choir?" I asked bluntly.

"I! It was the Rector. You see, all through the service he keeps his eye on the choirboys, and if there is the least inattention he reports the offender to my husband. Poor Edward has been reported scores of times. Of course, while he was singing so wonderfully Mr. Easthorpe could do nothing, but the moment Edward's voice broke, out he must be put. How I begged Mr. Easthorpe to carry him over the growly period. But you know what the Rector is when he makes up his mind."

So that was that. Edward hadn't blessed a persecutor, after all, and would have to begin all over again and find a way of

blessing the Rector. But you mustn't think we weren't both very pleased to be helping.

I must skip four months (which I understand is a very wrong thing for a short story teller to do) and describe our meeting with Mrs. Vowkes at Victoria Station on her return from the Engadine. Edward had bought a large bunch of violets to give her, in that going one better than old Vowkes, who was beside himself with excitement and delight, and kept telling us again and again the story of the miraculous healing of the right lung. When Mrs. Vowkes sprang out of the carriage, looking prettier and years younger, Vowkes said :

"There she is, Edward, your handiwork. What do you think of it?" I don't think until that minute Edward had realised what

a splendid thing he had done. The greatness of it knocked him over, and he forgot his prepared speech of welcome, and stood blushing and grinning just as I should have in his place.

There was only one fly in the ointment, the thought that he had forfeited his only means of providing for his old age, and that, rather oddly, was removed after we had seen the Vowkeses off in a cab, and were walking homewards. In the window of a public-house I noticed an announcement of a comedian's "grand annual benefit."

"You see that, Edward," said I, "his annual benefit. It isn't like a county cricketer's benefit, that comes once only in a lifetime. You can have another benefit when the time comes to provide for your old age."

A CHILD'S GARDEN.

OH, there's lots of things in my garden,
It's as big as big can be!
But Gardener says that nothing'll grow,
'Cos most of it's under a tree.

But Mummie says everything's lovely,
And when the summer comes
I'll pick her the very best of my flowers,
'Cos we're tremendous chums!

There's heaps of things in my garden!
I do so hope they'll grow.
I pull them up to see sometimes,
'Cos they are so very slow.

I'm afraid my rose tree's dying—
And I water it twice a day!
I cut off some of the roots last week,
'Cos they seem to be in the way.

There's going to be two chrysanthemums,
A yellow one and a brown,
But I'm not quite sure 'bout the daffodils,
'Cos I think they're upside down!

But Mummie says everything's lovely,
And Dad says "Wait and see,"
And Gardener says that nothing'll grow,
'Cos most of it's under a tree!

G. R. W. OLVER.

THE CABRIOLET

By MARJORIE BOWEN

Author of "Stinging Nettles," "The Viper of Milan," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

JOURNEY THE FIRST, 1760.

THE cabriolet spun down the well-kept road between Versailles and Paris; two big Danish dogs ran in front to clear the way, the coachman flourished a long whip that sometimes flicked the ankles or shoulders of pedestrians who were not deft enough in leaping aside.

The cabriolet was so modish and elegant that everyone turned to gaze after it. It would certainly create a new fashion; it was closed, and the upper portion was pale lemon, the lower portion and the great wheels black. A gilt-and-scarlet coat-of-arms glittered on either door; the horse that so prancingly drew this delicate carriage was of a gleaming white colour in the May sunshine.

The one occupant carried such a large bouquet of pale lilac that the clusters of tiny blossoms blocked the windows, and she could not be seen.

With gay jauntiness the cabriolet swept into Versailles town and stopped before a flat-fronted pink house with white pilasters and white swags of fruit. The little black page leapt from the box and let down the step.

Mademoiselle Hyacinthe de St. Hilaire descended, holding high the mass of lilac. It was tied with turquoise ribbons that fluttered behind her. Her dress of white lace was like a handful of foam, and her rosy hat was as a shell tilted on her loose curls.

Friends came out of the house and admired the cabriolet. How exquisitely made it was! How finely upholstered with lemon-coloured velvet! How beautifully swung on the leathern straps! How commodious, fashionable, and elegant was the whole design!

Mademoiselle St. Hilaire went upstairs to her cool, beautiful room, where the glitter of all her gold and silver ware was dimmed by the shadow of the jasmine and roses that overhung her balcony, so that the blue

damask-hung room was like a grotto beneath a pool, deliciously shaded by greenish and limpid darkness.

It was late afternoon. Beyond the balcony the garden was still, under the radiance of a western sun, banked with flowers, with a thicket at the end and tall Italian trees, with a fountain casting up delicate pearls of water.

Mademoiselle de St. Hilaire changed her frock. While she robed, she told Victorine, her maid, of her visit to her aunt in Paris, and her sitting to the Court painter, and how he was painting her as "Hebe" feeding an eagle from a golden platter.

"And, Victorine, I was thinking, the while he and Madame, my aunt, chattered, if only I could get on the back of the eagle and be carried far, far away!"

"To England, Mademoiselle?" asked Victorine slyly.

The evening came, purple and joyous. There were lutes and violins in the house, and in the garden nightingales. The stars are as brilliant as a great lady's jewels, save where the rising moon blots them from the sky.

Guests move about the house, that glitters in a thousand points, crystals, gildings, sequins from the soft reflections of a thousand candles, but Mademoiselle de St. Hilaire is in the garden with one who is no guest, but who has scaled the wall like a thief, and crouched hidden behind the syringa bushes and the tall plots of lilies. She had crept out in her cunning night-blue velvet, that hides her from all spies, and her black lace thrown over head and shoulders.

Clasped close, wincing away from the encroaching ivory moonlight, they whisper their eternal love, their eternal woe—she the daughter of a peer of France, a proud, a cold, a hard man, he a young English esquire come to Paris in the train of an English Ambassador.

"Do you love me?" she said. "Do you love me?" And he could hardly distinguish her voice from that of the nightingale.

"Do I love you?" he answered. "Oh, my darling! Yet who am I to tell you that I love you, when your father's lackeys cast me from his door?"

And they hid their young anguish among the lilies as the mounting moon discovered them. She clasped her frail hands round his strong, proud young neck, she clung to him with tender desperation.

"Take me away, oh, my love! Take me away, oh, my dear!" She pressed her face on the lace at his breast, she felt his pounding heart, and the nightingales sang mournfully to the distant lament of the lutes.

"Will you come with me to England?" he asked, and his voice quivered with hope. There was an English village where he was *something*. His mother, his brothers, his tenantry would stand by him. From English soil he could defy even the King of France himself.

In sighing whispers they made their mad plans, then dragged themselves apart, he to disappear in the darkness, she to return to the slow melody of the pavane which she trod gallantly with the man who was her destined husband and the object of her perfect hate.

A few days later the lemon-coloured cabriolet again set off on the Paris road; there was a string of diamonds in the coachman's pocket, and the black boy had been left behind. Mademoiselle de St. Hilaire had the rest of her mother's jewels sewn in her bodice, and a frivolous travelling-case and a pathetic-looking bundle on the seat beside her; and as the cabriolet neared Paris she trembled and prayed, and shivered and glowed.

The cabriolet flashed through poorer quarters than great ladies usually graced, and stopped before an inn called "*Mon Plaisir*," where a likely young fellow in a travelling coat walked up and down, biting his handsome lip in agitation.

There were only a few loungers about, and these took no particular notice of a gallant springing into a modish cabriolet and drawing the blinds closely after him; and the black wheels spun round again and the elegant carriage rattled away over the cobbles.

As he drew the blinds she cast herself into his arms. "Is it true? Are we really going away together? Oh, my Edmund, answer me!"

Esquire Dockura took the little creature to his heart and strove to be manly and composed (they were neither of them twenty years old). He told her of the arrangements he had made—of the inn on the Calais road where his friend and his horses were to meet them, of all his hopes and schemes, and the dear, dear home he had, and how they would all love her in England.

But she was not much concerned with this. It was joyous to have him beside her, to be thus closed away from the rest of the world, to lean against him, to trust him, to know they were driving away, away.

Swiftly went the cabriolet, when he wished to peep beneath the prudent blinds, but in accents of terror she implored him to be cautious. A man's hand at the window, a man's face glancing out, and they were lost indeed!

The cabriolet stopped. "Are we there already?" cried the girl, and "What has happened?" exclaimed the youth.

The elegant door was pulled open by her father's lackeys. The coachman, who had betrayed them, had driven them back to the flat pink-fronted house in Versailles with the white pilasters and white wreaths of flowers.

Upstairs waited the two Dukes, her father and her betrothed.

JOURNEY THE SECOND, 1793.

THE Duchesse de Sangeaunis stood at her window, listening to a distant sound that was neither wind nor thunder, but had the threat and volume of each.

The room behind her was dark and empty, cold and cheerless; the heavy furniture cast deep pools of shadow, the heavy pictures looked blank in their frames.

As the room became darker, darker, as the fine bright sickle of the new moon rose above the dark house-tops opposite into the steely blueness of the December sky, the distant shouts faded into a far-off muttering, and Madame de Sangeaunis left the window and lit a candle. As she placed this on a low cabinet of tulip-wood, the faint beams fell on one of the portraits, and called forth from the shadows the sparkling likeness of a young girl in a white lace dress, carrying a bouquet of lilac tied with turquoise-coloured ribbons.

The pretty, smiling face gazed out from the canvas above the bowed head of the tall sad woman in the plain gown, whose white hands were pressed above a brow where the grey threads mingled with the chestnut curls.

Through the silence the bell of the outer gates clanged. The Duchess instantly sprang up and put out the candle, and stood waiting, alert, in the folds of the long violet curtains.

A step sounded in the courtyard below. Ah, the gate had been open, then!

Madame de Sangeaunis moved from her hiding-place; her movement of concealment had been more instinctive than reasoned.

The footsteps halted; a man's tread, steady and sure; a firm blow was struck on the door.

The Duchess, with a proud shrug, opened the window and stepped on to the balcony.

"Eh, well, who is there?" she asked.

"Madame—good Heavens, it is the Duchess!" A masculine voice, eager and pleasant, speaking with a foreign accent, came strongly through the dusk. "Are you alone. May I come up?"

"It is Richard Dockura," she said quietly. "Now, what made you think of coming here?"

"I saw the candle. I heard you had all left Paris. I wondered——"

She went down and let him in. They came up the dark stairs to the dark room, and she again lit the candle, now drawing the heavy curtains across the windows. Once more the fair face of the portrait gazed out across the shadows.

"It must be three years," she said, "since you were at the Hôtel Sangeaunis."

"But I have never forgotten," he replied.

She looked at his fine young strength, and her lids drooped over the weary eyes. "Are you safe?" she asked. "It is dangerous to be in Paris now."

"As an Englishman I am safe. I have my passport. But you?"

"Ah, Mr. Dockura, I live here very quietly. When I can, I will get to Normandy, perhaps to England."

"The Duke?" he asked.

She was the child and the partner of a loveless marriage; she looked away.

"He has joined the Austrians. He thinks me safe. My brothers, my father, my cousins—all killed."

"And you live here—alone?" There was horror in his tone.

"No, I live in the very quiet rooms with Annette, my old *bonne*, but I came back to-night to fetch some—papers—I don't know——" she finished listlessly.

"The people are sacking empty houses to-night," said Mr. Dockura.

"I know. That is not news."

"You must let me take you away."

She did not answer.

The man's eyes went to the portrait.

"How alive that looks to-night!"

"My poor mother? Yes. She looks so happy. And I, somehow, never remember her as happy."

"It is a lovely face."

"I was very young when she died," said the Duchess, gazing at the painted face, "but she told me—what do you think? That the year that portrait was painted, when she was still Hyacinthe de St. Hilaire, she was in love with an Englishman."

He laughed uneasily.

"Then there is some bond between us, Madame. My father fell in the war when I was a little lad, but he always loved France. I have inherited that."

"Some bond," repeated the Duchess.

She rose. They were standing very close together; the fluttering candle-light picked them out of the vast dark room.

"How strange," she murmured, "that you of all men should come here to-night!"

"How strange that you, of all women, should be here to-night!"

They stared at each other.

"Let us go," he said, and she: "I feel as if all this had happened before."

She took some jewels out of the desk and put them in the bodice of her dress, she fastened her cloak and quenched the candle. The portrait of Hyacinthe de St. Hilaire was absorbed in darkness.

As they traversed the wintry streets, he told her that this was her best chance of leaving Paris. He had friends at one of the barricades, and he would smuggle her through as—ah, they must think of some disguise!—and there were friends again, and English, waiting for him to join them at the first halt on the Calais road.

"My daughter," said the Duchess, "is already in England; she arrived safely with her aunt. You remember her?"

"That little child! Like your mother, too, Madame."

"Yes. I have named her, you know, Hyacinthe."

At Mr. Dockura's inn his servant was impatiently waiting; they had missed the stage, and a coach had been difficult to find. However, Jaspar, knowing his master was resolved to leave Paris as soon as possible, had contrived to hire a cabriolet from a posting stables.

And there it stood waiting for them, elegant, jaunty, lemon-yellow and black.

only a little out of fashion, only slightly cracked and dusty, worn and battered.

Mr. Dockura explained the Duchess to Jasper, who climbed on the box, and the

mittent glare of the street-lamps they gazed into each other's faces.

"Oh, my love, my love, in the happy days I did not dare!"



"Lantern and flambeaux
cast angry flares on them."

cabriolet rattled towards the gates of Paris. On the shabby velvet cushions the woman leant back, clasping her heart.

"All this—I seem to remember," she murmured, "the motion—you and I together in a lemon-coloured cabriolet. *Mon Dieu*, what am I saying?"

"I don't know," he answered, with a kind of soft violence. "I recall something—thwarted, ended suddenly——"

He took her cold hands; in the inter-

"Oh, my love, my love, I have thought of nothing but you since you left me!"

"I was but one of your acquaintances, an obscure figure in your sparkling *salon*."

"No, all the world, all the world!"

"Tell me your name, my darling!"

"Do you not know my name?" she smiled. "It is Edmée."

"Edmée! That makes me think of my father Edmund, and Edmund is my name, too, Richard Edmund."

Away sped the cabriolet, the worn leathers swinging, the chipped wheels swinging round and round, while the lovers sat with clasped hands, amazed, radiant, incredulous.

At the barrier, the first hitch. Camille Dunois, on whom Mr. Dockura relied, was not there—in fact, he was already in La Force.

arms under the first coat of lemon paint; he is for smashing the cabriolet as an aristocrat, the citizen-owner, driving, fiercely protests. There is a scuffle, oaths, shouting.



"And you, Citizen Dockura, who is this woman of whom there is no mention in your passport?"

"And you, Citizen Dockura, who is this woman of whom there is no mention in your passport?"

Lantern and flambeaux cast angry flares on them, the crowd hem closely round the gay sides of the little cabriolet. One of the citizens, sharp-eyed, sees traces of a coat-of-

Then in the pale face of the woman so coldly facing her enemies someone recognises a suspect.

"Edmée de Sangeaunis, wife of an emigré."

As they try to drag her out, Mr. Dockura fires, and someone else fires, and Edmée falls

at his feet. As they drag him off raving, as they pull away Jaspar, battling like a bull, the citizen-owner is angrily mopping up the blood that is staining the faded yellow seat.

JOURNEY THE THIRD, 1860.

"MAMMA, I vow and declare that he is paying attention to the governess! You may not believe it——"

"It is indeed incredible," said Mrs. Hilton, looking round at her three blooming daughters, as they stood ready, in bonnets and cashmere shawls, for the croquet party at the Hall.

"Everyone says so," added Miss Amelia.

"He has eyes for no one else!" cried Miss Adelaide.

"I think she has bewitched him," said Miss Amy, with a half sob.

Mrs. Hilton did not trust herself to speak; she, too, had seen awful, not-to-be-ignored signs that the young Squire, the best match for miles around, was really fascinated by the plain middle-aged governess at the Rectory. And a year ago, before this lady made her appearance, Mrs. Hilton could have sworn that the coveted prize would really fall to the lot of one of her girls.

"It is indelicate to be discussing such things," she remarked at last serenely.

"Yes, mamma," said all three girls together.

She marshalled them before her into the big family carriage; they lowered veils over their bonnets and put up tiny parasols against the heat of the August sun.

Thomas Dockura was so charming to his mother's guests that even Mrs. Hilton began to think that it must be a mistake about the governess and that, after all, dear Amy. . .

It was Amy who found the heat excessive for games and who had to be entertained in the house. With infantile simplicity she turned the conversation to France.

"Would you not greatly like to go to Paris, Mrs. Dockura? I understand it is a city both instructive and amusing."

"A trip to Paris would hardly be a diversion suitable for one of my years, my love," smiled Mrs. Dockura, "and my husband had such an aversion to the city that I never went there in my youth. You see, his father had been in La Force during the Revolution of 1789, and never recovered from the experience, I believe."

"Oh!" said Miss Amy. "And were not Mademoiselle Vesey's grandparents killed in that same Revolution?"

"And who, my love," demanded the elder

lady, with icy sweetness, "is Mademoiselle Vesey?"

"The governess at the Rectory," replied the girl, blushing.

"Ah, my memory is bad for the names of that kind of person."

"She is quite superior. She was formerly with Lady Meugham."

"I hope," said Mrs. Dockura darkly, "Lady Meugham was satisfied. But really, my pet, we are getting upon low topics."

When the croquet party was over, Thomas Dockura wandered across the summer fields towards the Rectory. At the end of the Rector's orchard he paused.

She was there to meet him—a figure very erect and fragile in her ugly heavy gown, with her close-banded hair and massive brooch, and hands—he thought—the colour and texture of hawthorn blossoms.

"I have only an hour," she said in a low voice.

"This slavery!" exclaimed the young man angrily.

They turned together, two sombre, bowed figures, across the flowering fields, where the meadowsweet was waist-high and the poppies were beginning to redden the corn.

"This must be the last time we come for these walks," said Mademoiselle Vesey at length. Her English was pure, but her accent markedly foreign. "I should have stopped them before if I had not been weak, Mr. Dockura."

"Is it all being made so difficult for you?" he asked miserably.

"Very difficult. These good people take me for a sort of servant, and they think it a great presumption for me to be friends with you." Her dark eyes looked at his confused countenance; she was pale in the depths of her shabby bonnet. "And you," she added, with a smiling pride, "know very little about me, except that I must earn my living. And I suppose you will have heard queer stories—about me."

"Never! Never would anyone dare——"

Mademoiselle Vesey continued smoothly, as if he had not interrupted.

"My father was the Comte de Vesey, who made his living as a dancing master, my mother was the daughter of the Duc de Sangeaunis—both he and his wife were killed in the Revolution of 1789—on each side, you see, *émigrés* of a family now extinct, save in me, and in me, penniless and very obscure."

"You are better born than any of us," he

said quickly. "I guessed as much—your look, your carriage——"

"The women hate me," she said simply. "I cannot stay here—better in London, where there are other poor foreigners I may meet."

The man was silent. He thought of her as mistress of the Hall. How gracious and lovely she would be! How he wanted her! How he yearned for her! But he was afraid. He thought of his family, of his neighbours, and he was afraid. To conceal his heart he made uneasy conversation.

"My grandfather was in Paris during the Revolution, was even thrown into La Force. He was a very sombre, taciturn man, and never spoke of his experiences."

"One would not," said Mademoiselle Vesey simply.

They had made a circle through the fields, and now came out on to the sunny high-road near the white-fronted inn. A little cabriolet stood at the door, a poor dilapidated old cabriolet, patched and mended and clumsily repainted.

"This is a queer little carriage," said the lady. "Do you know it gives me a curious feeling when I see it?"

"I believe it is French," replied Mr. Dockura. "My grandfather is supposed to have brought it from Paris; but he never used it, and it became so old-fashioned that my father gave it to the inn, and they find it convenient to hire to the rustics for their merry-makings."

"Poor little cabriolet! said Mademoiselle Vesey wistfully. "Think of who may have sat in that, Mr. Dockura!"

She paused and placed her hand on the yellow side. "I should like to ride in it—just once," she pleaded. She looked over her shoulder as she said this, and for a second Mr. Dockura had an impression of a woman radiantly lovely, adored, exquisitely dressed, looking at him with love in her eyes.

"We will ride in it together," he said quickly. He spoke to the ostler, and told him to drive them to Darley, where there was a fair. "I will buy you a fairing," he added, as he handed her into the cabriolet.

It was lined with coarse brown cloth, the cushions were burst and hard, the windows rattled, and the new springs were clumsy, but gallantly and gaily it rattled down the long, peaceful, dusty English road.

"My ancestors rode in carriages such as this," said the lady. "I have the names of two of them—Edmée, my grandmother, and Hyacinthe, her mother."

Thomas Dockura looked at her wildly; he was oppressed by a sense of loss and desolation, of yearning and frustration. "I remember so much," he murmured, "that never happened to me."

"I do also," she said quietly. "I've been here before—with you—do you remember?—lilacs—and then—— *Mon Dieu*, what happened?"

"Each time we lost each other," he answered under his breath. "I lost something twice."

They sat side by side, close together, their dropped hands fell into each other's palms, and they did not know it. Thomas Dockura lost sense of time and place; he could not have told where the cabriolet was bearing them so swiftly, who was the woman by his side. The summer sunshine that fell athwart the windows filled him with a sense of poignant sadness that was almost unbearable, but the presence of the woman whose hand he touched stirred him to great depths of joy yet blurred by unfathomable yearnings.

They reached Darley and stopped at the entrance to the fair, where the gay pennons of the booths fluttered against the golden blue sky of late summer afternoon, and knots and clusters of gay and happy people wandered among the ropes and pegs of the tents that disfigured the worn grass, and joked with the battered clowns, and fed the piebald ponies with sugar and carrots.

Mr. Dockura and Mademoiselle Vesey descended from the cabriolet and walked slowly, as if drugged by enchantment, through the sweet summer air rent by the cries of charlatans and jugglers. The woman was the first to recover herself.

"That ride," she said, "made me forget many things. I think it took me back to very long ago. I thought all the time of Paris and beautiful troubles. But now I must remember what I came to tell you, Mr. Dockura."

They wandered apart from the noise, at the back of the tents, where the children of the strolling players rolled about with the performing animals.

The man looked keenly and wistfully at his companion. How graceful she was, how charming, how desirable, even with her faded youth, her ugly clothes!

"I am leaving the Rectory," she added, "and returning to London."

His handsome face grew troubled.

"There is a gentleman," continued Mademoiselle Vesey, "who is willing to

marry me—a M. Franchion, one of our little colony. He has a great gift for glass-making, and earns a comfortable income with his tiny factory."

"But you do not love him?" asked Mr. Dockura.

"I respect him very much," she answered. "He is old—a friend of my poor father."

It was his chance. Why should he let her go? Surely long tiresome years had brought them together—surely they belonged one to the other with deep ties and strong bonds.

He turned to take her hands and ask her to be his wife, when he saw through the tents the laughing, sneering face of Jack, Amy's brother, who was lounging about with a couple of companions.

Thomas Dockura at once saw his behaviour as it would appear in the eyes of his own class. This woman was a foreigner, neither young nor pretty, an adventuress, for all he knew. They would, of course, laugh. And he had taken that ridiculous cabriolet from the inn. Of course they had seen him. He flushed deeply, and his words choked in his throat.

"Let us go home," said Mademoiselle Vesey swiftly. "Let us go home."

Stiff and embarrassed, he conducted her to the entrance to the field. "I must really go and see some friends of mine——" he began.

She looked at him tenderly, as if she understood and pitied his cowardice, his denial, his betrayal.

"I will go alone," she interrupted. "It is better *vis-à-vis* your friends——"

"The cabriolet," he said awkwardly, "that will take you——"

"Oh, no!" She shrank away. "Somehow—oh, I don't know—it seemed perfumed with blood!"

THE HALT, 1923.

"I HOPE the man's some good, Riggles," said Nancy; "the last two architects were both duds."

"I'm sure I can't see why you don't leave the place as it is," retorted Riggles, furiously knitting a primrose silk jumper. "I find it quite comfortable."

Nancy lit another cigarette. "But your pose, Riggles dear, is to be decorously old-fashioned. I happen to want a covered tennis court, a swimming bath, a ballroom, and a few little things like that."

"Why didn't you think of that when you bought the place?"

"You *know* how it appealed to me," replied the girl reproachfully. "I felt as if I was *meant* to be the mistress here; but, of course, it is too small."

"You've too much money," said Riggles severely.

"Well, you're not a pauper," responded Nancy.

"When does your architect arrive?" asked Riggles, shaking out her jumper.

"Now, I hope—the feast waits." She glanced at the opulent tea-table. "I hope they'll send the senior partner, not some wretched article clerk."

The man-servant showed in a tall young man, announcing: "Mr. Dockura."

Nancy, a slim creature in a white slip of a tennis frock, put down her cigarette and held out a cool hand.

"How d'you do? This is my aunt, Miss March. I'm Nancy Franchion—Franchion's glass works. I've got a lot of money, so you're safe to do what you like with the old place. I bought it three years ago. Rather fancy it, but there's lots to do to it. You're the junior partner? Have some tea?"

She finished with a dazzling smile, slid into a cushioned seat behind the frail tea-table, and began to pour out the sparkling tea.

The young man smiled also. "Yes, I'm the junior partner," he said. "I generally get this sort of job."

"You're pretty good?" queried Nancy. "Extraordinarily good," he said.

They all laughed.

"You see," remarked Miss March, "how spoilt, rude, ill-bred and tiresome Nancy is. I'm sorry for you, Mr. Dockura."

"I see," he replied, "but I'm interested in the house."

"Are you really? I am, too, though it is ugly, isn't it?"

Nancy handed him opulent cakes.

"It belonged to my family," said the young man.

"To your family?" she exclaimed. "But I bought it from a Mrs. Grant."

"Oh, it has changed hands frequently during the last forty years. My grandfather sold it. His wife was a Miss Amy Hilton, of Hilton's Bank that crashed, and the old boy had all his money in it. Of course I shall find it awful fun pottering about the old place."

"But I don't want any pottering," said Nancy. "I'm extremely efficient."

"Portrait of a modern young woman," remarked Riggles.

"So am I," said Mr. Dockura, eating macaroons. "I say, it's jolly being here. I suppose you've got lots of the old lumber, too?"

"Lots," replied Nancy, swinging her jade chain. "Ancestors and such-like atrocities. We're a decent family, aren't we, Riggles? But, being glass-works, father thought he'd like a place that would give us *ton*."

"My ancestors?" asked Mr. Dockura.

"Lots," replied the lady again. "I've got no pictures of mine, so I fill the gallery with yours. We're self-made."

"But we can trot out a duchess and duke or two," said Riggles.

"French Revolution, horrid fate, guillotine, powder, minuet, you

it? At the Rectory. Somewhere about 1860. Poor as a rat. Her mother was Mademoiselle de Sangeaunis, the daughter of the Duchess of that name, who was, or ought to have been, I've no doubt, guillotined. We simply went to bits. Father's side, too, but grand-



"It makes me think of my girl with the lilacs," he remarked."

know the recipe—like the kind of play you go to see, but wish you hadn't."

"I'm awfully keen on the French Revolution," announced Mr. Dockura. "And you're really French, then, Miss Franchion?"

"My grandmother was—she used to be a governess in this village. Can you conceive

father, when he was shockingly old, began to make a success of the glass-works——" She stopped suddenly and, dropping her flippant manner, added: "I wonder why I am telling you this?"

"I'm wondering, too," said Riggles. "Such a snobbish display I've never heard you guilty of before."

But the two young people were looking at each other.

"It's awfully funny," he said, "but you're just like an old print I've got at home. I bought it in the Charing Cross Road for twopence—a kind of a French eighteenth-century thing."

"Who is it?" asked Nancy almost sharply.

"I don't know," he admitted ruefully. "There is no name on it. It's just a girl with a bunch of lilac tied with long ribbons, and a little hat——"

"And like me," finished Nancy. "Perhaps an ancestress—who knows?"

He had been there a week before his sketches were anywhere near in order, or the first rough plans anywhere near indicated, but what he had done pleased the wilful young woman, so early orphaned, so grotesquely wealthy, very much. She had been meaning to fill the house with visitors before Easter, but she put them off and devoted herself to considering the additions the architect proposed to the Hall.

She showed him, rather forlorn in the attics, his ancestors, ugly old paintings of no value. One was named Edmund.

"We had a tradition in our family about that name," she added. "Some far-away grandmother was in love with an Edmund—I believe an Englishman—and she made some kind of a vow to have the name perpetuated in the family. Why, even I am called Edmée, but no one could stand it, so I'm Nancy."

One day she stood beside him as he was examining the old stables. "Do you simply hate this?" she asked bluntly. "Doing this work for a stranger on a place that used to be yours?"

He looked at her with a frank smile on his pleasant face. "Of course I feel friendly to the old place," he said, "but it went before I was born, and I'm happier as I am than tied up with this—nowadays."

They walked together across the spring fields as Thomas Dockura had walked with Mademoiselle Vesey, with Amy Hilton, sixty years before, and as one day they skirted some disused barns by some hopfields, he pointed out a queer-looking object by a pond.

It was a battered old wreck of a cabriolet without shafts, with the wheels fallen flat either side, with the hood in tatters, with the paint flaked away and the woodwork cracked.

"That poor old cab," said Nancy, "it used to be kept in the inn stables. I suppose it wasn't worth houseroom, so they've just turned it out."

"It looks jolly old!" he exclaimed. "Look at the shape of the thing—like a sedan chair, now it's without wheels. I wonder how it ever got to a place like this?"

They crossed the summer grass and walked round the miserable derelict.

"It's full of bogies, I expect," said Nancy.

"It makes me think of my girl with the lilacs," he remarked, "think of her in this——"

He pulled open the rotting door and gazed into the tattered, mildewed interior. There was a smell of decay, of damp, of death, but the decay, the damp, the death of flowers, of beauty, of love.

The girl peeped over his broad shoulders. She shivered slightly, the manners of her little moment vanished from her; she was just a woman, like Hyacinthe St. Hilaire, like Edmée de Sangeaunis, like Claire Edmée Hyacinthe de Vesey.

"Look at the old velvet rags on the seat," she said in a low voice, "the under-lining. Ah, stained, too!"

She stepped aside and looked at him through the broken window.

"Like that," he said, "like that, with the flowers under your face."

She sank back on the ragged seat, frightened. "I've been here before," she whispered. "Do you remember——"

But she could not remember herself; her mind became confused, and she gazed blankly.

"Isn't your name Edmund?" she asked, with a puzzled frown.

"Of course, and yours Edmée?"

The wheel came full circle as the yellow cabriolet at last sheltered their complete, their free, their happy kiss.



THE AFFAIR OF KALAUK. THE SKILFUL HUNTER

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

IF you journey by way of the Fox Channel and Boothia Gulf, turning north along the edge of Beaufort Sea, you will come to the place where Kalauk, which being interpreted means the Skilful Hunter, sat in the lee of a wind-whipped rock and stared thoughtfully at the Arctic Ocean. At a little distance Kinniuk, the Orphan, played industriously with the bleached skulls of five square flipper seals. For the rest of it, there was an apology for a tent, made of walrus hide, Kalauk's skin-covered kayak, lifted delicately beyond the reach of the waves, a spear or two, three lean and mangy dogs, a battered, up-ended sledge, and that was about all, except the Arctic Ocean.

But Kalauk was not conscious of anything being missing, for nothing was missing. All his stock-in-trade was here, everything by which he and the Orphan survived and wrested subsistence from land and sea and ice. He wondered sometimes how Kinniuk would fare if he were cast on his own resources, because the boy seemed interested in all but hunting and fishing, which was a serious handicap for an Eskimo youth. Also, at the moment, Kalauk was racking his wits to contrive how he would get along that coming winter with three dogs instead of four. Now, the way the fourth had gone was by virtue of a disagreement with a Polar bear, whose hide was by this time in Dundee, being carried thither by the whaling captain who happened along just as the row was over. Presently the father of Kinniuk made a little noise in his throat, whereat the dogs glanced at him suspiciously out of the tail of their narrow eyes, for this was summer-time, in which all the dogs of the North are doubly treacherous.

"We shall go to-morrow," he said briefly.

The Orphan balanced one shining skull

on the other till he had built up a grinning pyramid. "And where shall we go?"

"Anywhere the seal and salmon are to be found. I shall take the kayak, while you and the dogs take the shore."

"And the tent?" put in Kinniuk anxiously.

"If the weather be fine, I shall take the tent also; but if not, it shall be yours to carry. Have I not said this same thing to you many times already?"

Kinniuk only grunted. As a matter of fact, he had heard the edict pronounced ever since he could remember. He also knew that nothing was quite so hard to bear, and nothing made him quite so furious, as to go stumbling over rocks and hills for endless miles with that shapeless lump balanced on his shoulders, and watch at the same time his father skimming along a mile from shore with only an occasional stroke of his long double-bladed paddle. Then there were the dogs. He confessed privately to an aversion for dogs, which in itself was an extraordinary thing for an Eskimo of any age. And it seemed now that he spent most of his life with them, which was perfectly true, because there was no other society whatever. The real trouble with Kinniuk was that he felt unutterably lonely, and did not know it. His mother had died years before, when the woman's oomiak, or skin boat, had capsized in a bay of Ellesmere Island while they moved camp in the absence of the hunters; and since her Urnak, or guardian spirit, had appeared several times to her husband with warnings of what would happen if he took another spouse, it was very unlikely that the latter would take any chances whatever in this intimate business.

"How far do we go this time?" said the boy sulkily.

"Till you reach the spot where I shall be waiting for you," was the placid answer.

Kalauk did not say anything more, but chewed contentedly at the last fragment of the last square flipper seal he had killed. There were more where that one had come from, so he did not worry; and even should he not kill for the next few days, he was fat enough and oily enough to exist for a considerable time without serious discomfort. What he really wanted was another dog. And there were no females left in his team after that incident with the Polar bear the winter before.

About noon on the following day Kinniuk flung himself down on a ledge that overhung a long, narrow bay, and fixed his black eyes on his father's kayak, that danced lightly from wave to wave something more than a mile distant. He had never seen anything quite so effortless in his life, though he had seen it many times before. The boy himself was exceedingly hot from the awkward weight on the small of his back, and the dogs seemed possessed of many devils. The naked country all round was shimmering in the bright sun of the short Arctic summer, and except in the lee of the ridges there was no shade. He dared not leave the bundle of walrus skin for an instant, or the dogs would have got at it. Presently the nearest of them put a long, quivering nose into the air, sniffed at something that crept into his black, expanded nostrils, and sent out a quick, excited whimper. In the next moment he tore off straight inland, his lean belly close to the ground, and the other two leaping after him so closely that they looked like a narrow dirty wave of yellow fur. Kinniuk blinked. He could not swear, and this for the reason that only those folk who claim to have escaped from savagery know how to swear.

From a spur of the stark hills that lifted to the southward came a wild medley of sound, in which the frenzied barking of Kalauk's team was punctuated by another note, higher, sharper, and even more wild. Kinniuk held his breath and listened, till there shot into his mind a startling thought that made him forget instantly about the bundle that was torturing his soul. And at that he dashed off, rolling, as he went, like a coal barge in a gale, for the Eskimo is built for strength rather than speed. In ten minutes he knew what the trouble was.

Squatting on its haunches in the midst of the pack was a thing which, save for the length of its legs, was half the size of the

smallest dog, and Kinniuk knew it in a minute for a wolf pup. It was not the brown wolf of the timber country far to the south, nor yet the wolf of the Land of Little Sticks, but the great, grey Arctic wolf, the terror of the North. The dogs seemed to know it, too, for even now, when it was but a quarter grown and had but a fraction of its ultimate strength, they danced just out of reach of the long jaws and sharp teeth that were already formidable. But Kinniuk saw that the odds were too heavy and the end could not be far away. The grey flanks were already torn, and a gaping cut widened in the bony shoulder.

And then a curious thing happened, for the wolf's eyes met the boy's eyes, and it seemed that in some strange way there flashed from the former a swift, proud sort of appeal. Of course, as Kinniuk instantly realised, it could be nothing of the kind, but nevertheless there sped between these two pups of the North, animal and human, that which was in some mysterious fashion mutually understood. Simultaneously, and this was strangest of all, every vestige of fear was emptied out of Kinniuk's heart just as one empties sea-water out of a skin bucket. He saw the wolf pup, and loved it. He saw the yelping dogs, and for the first time in his life despised them.

Now, it is given to some to understand, and to others to seek diligently and yet understand not at all, and this applies to both men and beasts. So if you ask how it was that Kinniuk was able to cast away all fear, and how it came that the wolf pup, when the boy had beaten back the snarling team, lurched weakly forward and, with an upward glance of narrow, yellow eyes, laid his lean head between the boy's feet, it may simply be said that the North has mysteries of its own, and the empty spaces of the world are not more devoid of wonders than the teeming city.

Thus it came that in the fulness of time the team of Kalauk, the Skilful Hunter, was made complete, but it is told along the shore of Ellesmere Island and in many a cranny of the Arctic that in the making there was much tribulation. Between Amerauk, the wolf, and the dogs there was warfare till the increasing strength of the former, combined with the sharpness of his teeth and his amazing quickness of action, brought him gradually but surely to leadership. Through battle after battle he forged steadily ahead, and, with scarred flanks and long, white cicatrices on his

bony skull, emerged the undisputed master. Kalauk stood by, marvelling, and held his peace, for it seemed that with the wolf pup the boy Kinniuk was also finding himself. It was after watching wolf pup and man pup hunt the coast cariboo that Kalauk consulted Kitamauk, the Sorcerer,

once afraid of dogs, have now no fear of a wolf? It is not many months since your courage was like the sea-water that runs away through the sand till there is nothing left."

The boy grinned contentedly. He was curled up in a shapeless mound, his fingers



"The wolf pup, when the boy had beaten back the snarling team, lurched weakly forward and, with an upward glance of narrow, yellow eyes, laid his lean head between the boy's feet."

playing with the long, white hair that waved on Amerauk's throat. The lank jaws were open, disclosing a red cavern of mouth roofed with black. The brute lay motionless, his yellow eyes fixed on his master.

"We understand, the wolf and I—that is all."

"But it is not written that a wolf can understand, unless he be possessed of an evil spirit."

who happened to come that way, and was told that the matter was none of his affair. Then, not being entirely satisfied with Kitamauk, whose reputation in the Beaufort Sea was somewhat questionable, he broached the subject direct on an evening when he was full of seal meat and good nature.

"How is it, Kinniuk, that you, being

Kinniuk shook his head. "His spirit is not evil. I think it is that of my mother which has returned. Then why should I fear it?"

Kalauk glanced at him sharply. If here, indeed, were the spirit of his late wife, there was nothing for him to fear either. His mind went back to the time when Chiooka, which means the Woman with the Round Nose, was alive, and it began to appear that he had not treated her always just as well as he might—in fact, he distinctly remembered several occasions when he had not. So it seemed uncomfortably possible that Chiooka, who was always devoted to Kinniuk, had seized this opportunity to return to earth and even the score. Kalauk had been about to venture stroking the beast, but this last reflection made him hesitate. Just then Amerauk yawned, and one could see about a foot further down his throat. Kalauk decided not to do any stroking at that moment, and Kinniuk made a little gesture of amusement.

"It is in my stomach to ask you why it is that you are afraid of the wolf, if I am not, especially should this be indeed your wife." The boy drawled this out in a voice that Kalauk found distinctly irritating. "Would my father, the Skilful Hunter, not do what I do?"

"Thou art a fool. All my life I have done that which would turn thy bones to water."

"Look," said Kinniuk, and, rolling over, took the brute by one torn ear, then, with a chuckle, thrust an oily hand straight into the cavernous mouth. Amerauk did not stir, but a quick light dawned in the savage eyes and the slaver dripped from his rigid jaws. For a moment thus, man pup and wolf pup, till, with a little laugh, the boy withdrew his slimy fingers and gave that terrible head a playful push as though to signal that the game was over.

"Will my father, the Skilful Hunter, do this? Surely *his* bones, which are more ancient than mine, will not turn to water?"

Kalauk hesitated, feeling as uncomfortable as he had the summer before, when a bull walrus decided to come to the surface immediately beneath his kayak, with results that were nearly disastrous. Also he noted that Amerauk was now regarding him with an expression remarkably like the one which used to rest on the face of Chiooka when he had been more than usually unkind. It suggested that the time was coming, and it puzzled him greatly to imagine just how a wolf could manage to

convey that idea. So, putting all things together, he could see no reason for taking any chances that might be avoided.

"It may be that thy mother, being regretful at having given birth to so great a fool as thou art, is now sorry for thee and will not bite," he said contemptuously, "and, because she had thee for a son, is now punished and made to wear the skin of a wolf. Of these things I will speak to Kitamauk, the Sorcerer, when he returns this way from his hunting."

A low growl rumbled threateningly in the shaggy throat, at which Kalauk moved a little further off, while Kinniuk laughed delightedly. "My mother says that it will be well for both you and Kitamauk if there be no more talk of this matter." He got up, shook himself, and laid a caressing hand on the lean head. "Now we go to hunt the coast cariboo, Amerauk and I, for it seems that the hunting of my father is of no avail, and we be hungry, we two together." He paused, then added meaningly: "If Amerauk should run perchance on thy spear when the night is dark and be killed, the spirit of my mother may take on another shape which would please thee even less than this one. It is well to think sometimes of these things, and to-night there will be much meat."

He strolled off, the grey shape at his heels, while Kalauk stared silently after him. The conversation had taken a most unfortunate turn. It was perfectly true that the Skilful Hunter had contemplated putting a sudden end to these embarrassing circumstances, but he had never imagined the possible results as Kinniuk now pictured them, and no man could look forward to spending the rest of his life in trying to kill his late wife every time she assumed a new guise. The whole affair was full of awkward complications, and the more he reflected, the more puzzled he got. Just then the hunting cry of the grey wolf sounded from inland, and he ran quickly to the top of the nearest ridge to watch Amerauk in action.

Lying on his stomach, he peered eastward over the great tundra, which now, in the swimming warmth of summer, was a series of long, low, rolling undulations of rock, covered partly with tufted moss and interspersed by lakes where the wildfowl reared their families with a whistling and calling and quacking that went on day and night. Between two of these lakes he discerned a small band of coast cariboo, all females who had come north, without the

bucks, to bear their young. There were, perhaps, a dozen of them, crowded close together, the calves in the middle and protected for the moment by the jostling bodies of their mothers, tawny, yellow bodies on which the new hair grew in great, smooth patches, for this was the season when fur and feather in the North discard their old coats ere donning the new ones that Nature so marvellously provides against the bitter weather to come. But Kalauk was not interested in this, which was an old story to him. His eyes were fixed on a lean, yellow-white shape that darted in dizzy circles around the terrified deer.

It seemed that Amerauk was playing with his quarry ere he struck. Faster and faster he flew, his shaggy belly close to the ground, while the terrible head, thrust straight out in dreadful expectation, and the tawny brush trailing straight behind, transformed him into a sort of arrow of destruction. He moved not as a dog moves in leaps, but in a sort of streaming rapidity that was independent of time or distance, an animal projectile, sharp of tooth and of unnamable ferocity. Kalauk waited and held his breath. What chance had anything that lived in the North, save only the white bear himself, against an enemy like this?

Presently Amerauk wearied of his sport, and, swerving like lightning, made one vicious upward stroke at the throat of a trembling doe whose body projected a little further than the others. Kalauk's eye, sharp though it was, could hardly follow, but he noted in the next moment that the doe had begun to stagger, while from the frightened calves came a piteous bleating. The group swayed, lost formation, recovered it again and huddled still closer. The large, soft eyes were fixed on the common foe, but there was nothing to fight with, and the sharp horns of the bucks were five hundred miles away in the Land of Little Sticks. Amerauk swerved again, and this time, as though in a royal and savage disgust at such helplessness, dashed straight in, fastened with one leap at the doe's throat, and pulled her down. The band wavered and broke. Came a clatter of flying hooves on the bare rock, and the big beasts dispersed in winged terror, some to the east, some to the south. In a moment the wilderness swallowed them, calf and doe, till there was left only that half-dead mound of matted hide, with the gaunt brute fastened at the torn throat. And then, most terrible of all, there rose into the throbbing silence

that note of fear which speaks of peril in the empty spaces—the grey wolf calling to the pack.

It was an hour later before Kinniuk, burdened as to the shoulders with a bloody load, tramped into camp. At his heels was Amerauk with bulging sides, and it was evident that man pup and wolf pup had both eaten to the full capacity of their stomachs. Kinniuk dropped his trophy at Kalauk's feet without a word, which the latter found particularly irritating, while Amerauk, with his black lips lifted a little, rejoined the team. The latter smelled fresh meat, looked furtively at their leader, and did nothing. Kinniuk's skin was full to bursting, and for a while he said not a word, but lay on the flat of his back, his fat hands under his oily head.

"Where will my father hunt this winter?" he hazarded after a long silence, speaking casually as though it did not really matter very much.

"It is in my mind to go to the Bay of the Black Rock, there being shallow water at the mouth of the bay where the square flipper is found. But what has a child to do with such things?"

"Perhaps nothing, but it may be that the spirit of my mother will have something to say."

Kalauk felt a sudden surge of anger at this impertinence, and put out a hand as though to take the boy by the ear, when in that second something drew his eye to the leader of his team. The beast was staring at him with just the expression of resentment that Chiooka used to wear when he lost his temper in the years that were past. At least, this is what Kalauk thought he recognised, while added to it was a warning rumble in the shaggy throat totally unlike any sound Chiooka had ever made. Hastily he withdrew the hand, wondering hotly whether in all the country there could be another Skilful Hunter in such a position as his.

"Where else would I go?" he replied, disregarding all reference to his late wife. "Besides, there be many wolves in the hills behind that bay, and it may be that Amerauk would like the company of his kind."

Kalauk threw out this last in a sort of bravado, when, in a flash, the great idea came to him. Other wolves! The more the better, for their desolate cry would drift into his camp night after night with its ghastly invitation to the leader of his team

to come out and hunt and kill, till, after a while, Amerauk would vanish like a spirit indeed and be no more seen. And after that he would be well content with only three dogs. The more he thought of this, the more he liked it.

"Are you answered, O wise one?" he concluded sarcastically.

Kinniuk nodded. "We are content, Amerauk and I."

by winnowing their marvellous flight thousands of miles to the south, and when the lakes and pools were stiff and glazed, and snow had begun to gather in the hollows of the naked land, Kalauk made camp in the Bay of the Black Rock, and spent much of the night listening for those wild voices which would surely come before long from the dark hills in the east. Then in the small hours of a dead, still morning they did come,



"The lump detached itself and waddled towards his igloo."

Now, this was the way of it, and in the days when fur and feather made ready for the bitter weather, the former by putting on their winter garments and the latter

faint but unmistakable, and instantly drifted back the answer of Amerauk with a wild and savage fervour that made the blood run cold.



"Then he saw that it was a woman."

"It will not be long now," whispered the Skilful Hunter to himself, and rolled over and slept.

Thus began a strange season in which Kalauk knew not whether he was dealing with dog or wolf or devil. When morning broke, the brute was always there, but often it was plain that he had filled his belly meantime. No man saw his comings and goings. He was still leader of the team. He did not shirk his work, and pulled with the best of them. But if the days were Kalauk's, the nights were his own. Kinniuk would sometimes say that he had heard Amerauk hunting the night before, then

take the great head between his knees and stare curiously into the formidable eyes. By degrees Kalauk learned not to notice things, but was conscious of being watched with a ceaseless vigilance. The situation had begun to burden him heavily, when one day there grew a dark speck far out on the field-ice, and an hour later Kitamauk, the Sorcerer, drove his panting team into camp. Kalauk breathed a sigh of relief when he saw who it was, and, as Kinniuk happened to be out with Amerauk, the Skilful Hunter at once opened his heart to the wisest man on the Beaufort Sea. Kitamauk, chewing stolidly, listened unmoved, save only for an

occasional flash of his small, black eyes. He had known Chiooka. Presently he gulped down a final fragment of raw and frozen seal meat.

"It is written that the spirit of any man or woman may return to earth, having first chosen the shape it will take, but of many such happenings this is the most strange."

"Have I not said it is strange?" replied Kalauk impatiently.

"That is true, but you have not seen that the strangeness is because Chiooka, having once been a woman, now takes the form of a male wolf."

Kalauk started. "I had not thought of that."

"There can be but one reason, which is that while she was a woman she was so unhappy that she has refused to be longer a female of any kind."

"But if indeed she does not like me, why, then, does she stay and pull my sledge?"

"It is not for you, foolish one, but for Kinniuk that she stays. Also there may be that she has forgotten, and returns thus to perform it."

Kalauk felt more than ever uncomfortable, and put a greasy hand on the other man's knee.

"Then you, wise one, shall tell me what I must do, for there is not anything I would not do to put an end to this, since it makes a sickness in my stomach. Nor is there anything I will not give thee, even to the knife I have from the captain of the whaling ship, and the carved tusk that Cunayou, the Image Maker, gave to Chiooka many moons ago. Speak, therefore, because I hear the voice of Amerauk in the wind, and, like the wind, he comes quickly."

Kitamauk seemed undisturbed. "A thought rises in my mind like the square flipper seal to his air-hole," he said composedly. "Is there not left any of the tobacco of the bark of the red willow which you had from the Yellowknife Indian who fished on Dead Walrus Island?"

The other man choked a little. There was some left, but he had not thought it worth while mentioning.

"There is still half the bag, and it will be thine if the thought in thy mind shall keep on till it gets to the surface. What is this thought?"

Kitamauk shook his head, and just then Kinniuk shuffled into camp with Amerauk at his heels. He stared at the Sorcerer, and said not a word, but the wolf extended a long, sharp, black nose that wrinkled

suspiciously, then made a little sound deep in his throat. Kitamauk stood his ground, and the tenseness of the moment was passing, when Kinniuk gave a laugh, and, at a gesture, the beast disappeared. The Sorcerer glanced after it, and a wrinkled smile spread over his aged face.

"I would smoke now," he said briefly.

He left next morning, divulging nothing further before he struck off over the field-ice save that he would shortly return for the knife, the carved tusk, and the remaining tobacco. With this Kalauk had to be content.

A week passed in the Bay of the Black Rock, and it seemed to the Skilful Hunter that the leader of his team was becoming more human at every nightfall. When the team was wanted, Amerauk was in his place without a word of command. Out on the ice the long whip thong never touched him, because he never earned it, also because Kalauk had qualms about flogging the spirit of his late wife. So tractable was the beast that he wished that Chiooka had displayed more of the same engaging qualities before she departed. As to the other dogs, Amerauk lorded it over them with a sort of royal disdain. They stirred not till he had selected the lump of seal meat he desired, then slunk forward, tails between their legs. Thus peace reigned in camp so long as dogs and man attended strictly to their own business. But always the brute was watching. Kalauk dreamed of him when he slept, and the belief grew in his mind that Amerauk was waiting, waiting for that which was yet to come. As for Kinniuk, the boy only grinned. He was happier than ever before in his life.

On the afternoon of the seventh day another speck appeared on the hard horizon, and presently Kitamauk's team scrambled over the rough shore ice. The Sorcerer ran alongside, while a shapeless lump balanced on the lurching vehicle. Kalauk stared till the lump detached itself and waddled toward his igloo. Then he saw that it was a woman. Instinctively he glanced over his shoulder, as he often did now, at Amerauk. The beast was erect, legs stiff, lips lifted, and the long hair on his spine standing up like the back fin of a spring salmon. But, which was most amazing of all, the woman only laughed.

Kitamauk motioned her into the igloo, and, with Kalauk, crawled in after her. When they were seated, he coughed importantly and spoke thus:

"It is without question that the spirit of Chiooka inhabits the body of the wolf that follows thy son, and, being that of a woman, is therefore more troublesome to deal with. So it came to me that the only way was to call upon another woman, who is the more likely to understand, we being but men, you and I. Thus it is that I have brought my sister Kasiaga, the Flat Face, for whom I have not been able to find any use these many years."

Kalauk looked at him in wonder. The face of Kasiaga was undoubtedly as flat as an ice-pan. Also her teeth were nearly gone, the few remaining ones being worn and broken from the interminable chewing of much walrus hide. Her skin was like old brown leather, and as tough as a whip-lash. What powers had such an one, marvelled Kalauk, to charm away the spirit of Chiooka? He could understand her brother not finding any use for her. Then Kitamauk's dry tones came in again.

"It is written that while a woman, or even the spirit of a woman, will stand much from a man, she will not stand anything at all from another woman. Why this is I do not know, but it always has been thus since the world began, whereof the place is not far from here. Also, since I myself am tired of the Flat Face, I bring her to thee for a wife, and if after this thou art troubled further with the wolf Amerauk, you need not give me the knife and the tusk and the bag of Yellowknife tobacco. I have spoken."

Kasiaga croaked like an amused raven, but Kalauk gasped. He did not want to marry again, especially a thing like this. And what would Kinniuk say? He pushed out his lips, tried to speak, floundered, then made an ineffectual gesture.

"It has come to me in a dream," continued the Sorcerer suavely, "that you should be very thankful. Otherwise Amerauk will without doubt demand soon that by right he shall sleep in thy igloo beside thy son. Furthermore, if thou attempt to kill, the spirit of Chiooka may inhabit next the body of a white bear."

Silence fell beneath the icy dome, and Kasiaga looked more ugly every minute. But she would not be as difficult to handle as a jealous wolf. Kalauk had to admit that. He was still wavering when Kinniuk pushed in on hands and knees, glanced sharply at the Flat Face, and turned to his father.

"Who is this woman?"

At that there rose a raucous laugh, and Kasiaga, seizing Kalauk's dog-whip, crawled into outer darkness. The three stared at each other, speechless, knowing that Amerauk prowled close to the igloo. For a moment all was silent, till suddenly the sound of much tumult filtered through the icy walls. Kasiaga's voice lifted high in a wild, threatening cackle, punctuated by the stinging hiss of the twelve-foot thong. With it came the voice of Amerauk, but in a new note that yelped and complained, whimpered and whined, all at once. Kinniuk gasped with astonishment. Then the wolf-cry swelled into one long, heart-broken, despairing howl that thrilled to the heavens and grew fainter and fainter till it died mysteriously toward the eastern hills. After that the frenzied barking of Kalauk's team, for the dogs, it seemed, were in hot pursuit. Finally the entrance darkened. Kasiaga re-entered, flung the whip on the skin-covered floor, and fixed the Skilful Hunter with a beady eye.

"I had not thought to marry any man, being old, so perhaps it is well that I marry a fool. All men are fools, and whether thou or my brother be the greater it does not matter. He told me a tale that made my stomach turn over with laughter, but there being a husband at the end of the story, I did not laugh outright. The spirit of Chiooka was not in the wolf, but the spirit of great foolishness was in both of you. The wolf is even now seeking others like himself, though it is in my mind that a man is not so easily cured. However, we shall see. Now I am hungered, so give me seal flesh. I have spoken."

She grinned contentedly, showing a lean throat and a broken row of rusty teeth.



THE HOUSE ON THE COMMON

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

IT was by no mere accident that Harklaw arrived at the Royal Hotel, Fortmouth, during the time that the hotel was giving shelter to Molly Rydal and her mother. On the fifth and last occasion when Molly had gently but firmly intimated to him that she would just as soon contract an alliance with a Mormon elder, he had promised that he would never purposely put himself in the way of seeing her again. If he broke his word, I will leave the blaming of him to those who own a higher moral standard than mine. For my own part I prefer to say that some promises are harder to keep than others, that some promises are never meant to be kept at all, and that if humanity and perfection were interchangeable terms, I know of at least one story-teller who would be compelled to throw up his trade and lead a useful life.

Mrs. Rydal, good, charitable soul, who had a sneaking regard for Harklaw, and thought her daughter had treated him badly, regarded his arrival as a coincidence. Molly Rydal would have given a great deal to make sure.

Certainly Harklaw's behaviour was perfect. He was not absurdly distant, nor was he obtrusive. He did not appear dismal, nor did his normal cheerfulness take on an appearance of bravado. He went his own way, but did not elaborately avoid opportunities of talking to mother and daughter, particularly to mother. He still called Molly by her Christian name; only callow youth, scowling and morose, could have done otherwise. In short, his behaviour was so abnormally normal that it distressed Molly's mother—who thought that the dear child had lost the love of a good man—and gave Molly herself considerable food for conjecture.

"He doesn't care for me any more," she thought. "I'm so glad!"

Yet it is likely that she was not so much glad as conscious that she ought to feel glad. Having raised her foot to spurn the worm for the sixth time, it was a little annoying to find that the worm had wriggled away into the safety of the long grass. Harklaw sought no private interviews with her, suggested no moonlight strolls. He dressed in rather vivid tweeds and plus fours, went to the links after breakfast and again after lunch, had got his handicap down to six and was childishly proud about it, and talked the jargon of the royal and ancient game. Molly, who had previously looked kindly upon golf, began suddenly to detest it.

Having regard for the fact that Harklaw was still as anxious as ever to provide Miss Rydal with a new name and prefix, I am at a loss to account for his conduct, and can only throw out suggestions. Possibly it was some new campaign too deep and subtle for my understanding. Possibly he subscribed to a theory that he had best put himself unobtrusively in Molly's path from time to time, and let the Fates provide him with the opportunity of winning her. The Fates are sometimes kindest when we tell them our aspirations and leave the rest to them, and the divinity which shapes our ends may well resent our own clumsy efforts at carpentry. Also he knew enough about women to be aware that his own magnificent indifference was as a thorn in the flesh.

However these things may be, it would seem that the Fates appreciated the subtle compliment he had made them in leaving it all to them and engineering nothing on his own account, for they provided him with the time and the place and the loved one

all together, not to mention Mr. Mortimer Bigstraw, yet to be introduced.

It happened that when Harklaw had been in Fortmouth for just a week he felt a slight soreness in the forearm, and decided to forego his afternoon round of golf. As yet he knew nothing of Fortmouth but its principal shopping street, the sea front, and the golf course. Hills, yellow with gorse, rose high above the cliff-tops, and set him dreaming of solitude and cooler breezes. Accordingly he set his back upon the sea, and climbed hills until he came upon a windy common, with chalk roads winding among heather and gorse and bracken,

trees, and in the near distance, half visible through the foliage, a white-fronted house. A board, leaning over one of the gateposts at a tipsy angle, announced that this desirable residence was to be let or sold, and gave the name, in large white letters, of the firm of estate agents in Fortmouth which was commissioned to dispose of it.

To find a house "To let" was in those days sufficient of a phenomenon to intrigue Harklaw's interest. Empty houses had always fascinated him because of their peculiar atmosphere of loneliness and mystery. He might or might not find a caretaker or an open window; at least,



"It would be difficult to say which of the two was the more astonished."

with the sea far below, a mist of blue and silver.

Harklaw wandered aimlessly, busy with thoughts which are no affair of ours. The common was almost, but not quite, unspoilt. In spite of it being a common, there were houses there, some old and some which looked like brand-new Noah's Arks, and bore witness to the activities of those who dealt in bungalows and building sites.

Wandering afiel from a spot which threatened to become a colony, Harklaw found himself on lonelier and even higher ground, thickly wooded here and there with fir trees and beeches and silver birches. A wooden fence rail encircled a plantation, and, following it, he came in time to a drive gate and an unkempt drive wandering between

there were the gardens for him to wander in. He pushed open the creaking gate and sauntered down the drive.

On the edge of the plantation, before the trees gave way to an open space in front of the house, he found the rotten framework of a swing, and speculated as to what children had once played in the ruined garden around him. Having a morbid strain in his nature, he visualised boys who had been killed in the War, and old folk who had crept away from their pleasant country home into penurious obscurity.

The gardens, now weed-grown and unkempt, wore an air of once having been well tended, like some poor vagabond who had seen better days. Plantains and

dandelions and daisies grew among the long grass on the lawns. He could imagine them smooth-shaven and a hydrant playing, and the music of a lawn-mower. Flowers still grew among the weeds in the beds, and bedraggled rose-trees climbed a distant pergola.

He found a little round summerhouse, with a thatched roof shaped like a sugar-loaf hat, and a spike on the top, and sat inside while he lit and inhaled the first few puffs of a cigarette. He was all in tune with the brooding melancholy of the place. This life was a sad business, and the world a poor sort of place for disappointed men. What was it Chaucer had made Arcite say in his dying speech? Something about "What asken man to have? Now with his love, now in his colde grave, Alone, withouten any companie." Bad enough, but what about the poor men who had been denied their love?

Self-pity tempted Harklaw, but, recognising the whining wretch in time, he thrust him away, and rose up, deciding that he would see the inside of the house, if that were possible. It was not a large house. It had, indeed, begun life as a cottage, and had so far reached a status midway between that of a large farmhouse and a "desirable family property." Many architects at different periods had moulded its future, until it had been able to boast of ten bedrooms and a second bathroom.

Harklaw rang the front-door bell three times to summon a problematical caretaker. None answered the summons, and he rightly supposed the house to be empty. Walking around to the back, under the sightless stare of empty windows, he found a door which gave under his hand, and stepped into an empty scullery with a kitchen beyond.

The kitchen door gave access to a square inner hall, with a narrow outer hall and the front door beyond. A narrow oak staircase with a high balustrade climbed to the floor above. The place was warm, but smelt of desuetude. In broad shafts of sunlight streaming through high windows millions of atoms were at play. Ghostly echoes of hollow footfalls mocked his tread, as he crossed the hall and peered into one living-room with a marble mantelpiece, and into another living-room with an oak mantelpiece. Another and a smaller room, morning-room, study, or library, took his fancy, and he spent a long minute furnishing it out of some mental repository with cedar shelves and deep leather chairs.

Upstairs he found a maze of bedrooms, built on such a plan that he could not be sure, without blazing a trail, how many there were, nor if he had entered some half a dozen times and others not at all. The house had caught him in a strange spell, for which, had he analysed his feelings, he would have been at a loss to account. He was still exploring when, down below in the kitchen, a bell jangled.

Harklaw started as if a hand had fallen upon his shoulder. He was full of that sense of awe which an empty house imparts. There, in the quiet of the afternoon, daylight ghosts had been dogging his steps, whispering inaudibly in his wake, nudging and pushing noiselessly at his elbow. The old themes of the fairy tales, witches' houses set among woods, enchanted cottages which ensnared lonely travellers, had taken on faint colourings of possibility. And now that summons to the front door! From whom came it? For whom was it intended?

For one brief moment he was startled. Then he laughed at himself and understood. Some chance passer-by, attracted by the board, like himself, wanted to see the house, and, like himself, had tentatively rung the bell. The obvious and courteous thing to do was to go down and open the door, and explain that there was no caretaker, but that the house was open.

He went swiftly down the stairs to the front door, drew a rusty bolt at the top, pulled back the catch, and threw the door wide open.

On the other side of the threshold stood Molly Rydal.

II.

It would be difficult to say which of the two was the more astonished. There was Miss Rydal, plucking at the fingers of her gloves, expecting to encounter a caretaker, and trying to look as if something more than idle curiosity had brought her to the door. There was Harklaw, expecting to encounter some mature and respectable citizen in search of a residence, and half prepared to find a ghost upon the steps. Both uttered appropriate exclamations.

Harklaw was the first to recover. "Won't you come in?" he asked suavely. "So kind of you to come and see me so soon. The house is in rather a state. No furniture and not a carpet down yet. Still, you don't mind taking me as you find me. My home is always—er—I mean, always open—"

She was staring at him incredulously. "You haven't taken the house, Geoffrey!"

she exclaimed, with a kind of muffled indignation.

"Very well, Molly," he responded meekly, "you know best. But come in and have a look round."

"Have you?" she insisted, crossing the threshold. "The board's still there."

"Ah, of course, the board! Some day soon stout minions will arrive, drawn up in column of route, and the foremost will bear that board away like a banner. Here we have that which agents have conspired to call a lounge hall. On my right the staircase. Those wiggly things beside it are the banisters. You see, I am beginning to know the house already."

"Whom have you taken it for," she asked coldly—"Edith Wyatt or Gwen Farquhar? I take it that this is a preliminary step to matrimony."

He shook his head. "Certainly not. I am never going to marry. I shall live here alone in these dark rooms, brooding over the past, and eking out my time by trying to tame the goldfish. As a matter of fact, I—er—I haven't taken the house at all—yet."

"Ah!"

"But I'm certainly going to, some time in the future. Somehow I feel that this is just the house for me to come to when I'm a lonely old man, to spend the twilight of my days."

Molly looked at him strangely with half a smile. "Really!" she exclaimed. "How strange! That's just what I was thinking myself."

"What? That this would be a suitable house for me in which to drag out my lonely last years? That's uncommonly good of you, Molly. So thoughtful! I'd no idea that you took any interest in the future."

"I don't," she answered coldly. "I was just thinking that the house would suit me for the same purpose."

"How extraordinary! Two minds, *et cetera*. But we can't both spend our declining days here. It wouldn't be proper. But I don't suppose you'll want it when the time comes. You'll be a stout matron, with a fat stockbroker for a husband, and a taste for afternoon bridge."

The girl eyed him scornfully and turned her head. "I shall never marry," she said. "I dislike the idea of *belonging* to any man. I don't dislike men as men, but I have learned in time to distrust them."

"In that case," Harklaw said, "you may want the house, after all, and I suppose I ought to give way to you. Wait a moment,

though. I'm nine years older than you, so my declining days will start first. Also, women live longer than men on the average. In the ordinary course of Nature I am due to peg out about sixteen years in advance of you. You'd better let me have the house first. Then you can move in immediately after the funeral. I don't know that I won't do the handsome thing and leave it to you."

She looked at him with a new expression in her eyes. For some reason, almost unfathomable, she was hurt. The idea of Geoffrey dying sixteen years before herself was novel and painful. Not that she cared two pins about him, of course. . . .

"Do you really think, Geoffrey," she asked, "that I shall outlive you by sixteen years?"

"Mind," he returned, "I guarantee nothing. But if you look after yourself in middle life, and avoid dietetic mistakes, there is no reason——"

She made a little sound expressive of contemptuous annoyance. "Oh," she exclaimed, "please stop! I know when you're joking. What's this room here?"

"This," he said, holding open the door for her, "is going to be my study. There I shall be seen sitting at my desk, poring over my little store of relics—old dance programmes, a handkerchief I managed to steal, a wonderful letter I once had from a girl named Molly Rydal, who was very nearly fond of me for a time, and once sent her love to me. When your turn comes, Molly, you won't mind living here with the ghost of an old admirer?"

She started with a half-affected shiver. "Oh," she exclaimed, "I can't bear ghosts!"

"But I'd be such a kind ghost, Molly. You'd only feel my presence when you were lonely. (A little slow music here, please. Thank you.) And I'd never show myself, or clank chains, or groan in the chimney. I'd be just a protective influence, keeping the pipes from freezing in the winter, and scaring away burglars. You wouldn't mind the ghost of a man who once loved you, Molly?"

"Once loved me!" she exclaimed. "I know your sort of love. You've been carefully showing me, all the time you've been at Fortmouth, that I never really mattered anything to you!"

"My dear girl, what am I to do? I have already made you an honourable offer of marriage——"

"Five," she corrected, with suppressed triumph.

"Very well, then. Five honourable offers of marriage, all of which you declined with a firmness which would have deterred a canvasser for encyclopædias. This after you had half confessed a preference for me. In the circumstances——"

wouldn't come. You preferred dancing, and you told me yourself that any performing bear could give me points at that. Wasn't it natural that I should seek some amusement on my own account, while you were being bunny-hugged by some beastly little anthropoid? What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, you know."



"An old man's blessing follow you all your days . . . And don't forget—no oilcloth!"

"Yes, and in the circumstances you were running about with other girls, taking them to theatres and dinners—girls whom I shouldn't like to call *quite* ladies. And at the same time you were declaring undying love for me!"

Harklaw shrugged his shoulders. "My dear old thing," he expostulated, "I'd much sooner have taken you out. But you

The girl turned her shoulder upon him. "That strain of vulgarity in you has always been an embarrassment to me," she said. "Let's go and look at the garden."

"Straight on and through the kitchen," he directed.

She took elaborate pains to change the subject. "So curious," she said to him over her shoulder, in a bright conversational

tone, "that we should both have found our way here on the same afternoon. Mother was too tired to come out for a walk, so I came out by myself. It's so unusual to see a house to let that I couldn't resist coming in to have a peep. And I found you instead of the caretaker. Poor old house! Isn't the garden in a state?"

light-brown trousers were tight and uncreased, his coat long and cut with a tail, and he wore a Gladstone collar, a cravat, and the sort of bowler hat which was the last word in fashion at the time of the Diamond Jubilee. A luxuriant growth of whiskers dated him still further back.

While Molly and Harklaw stared at this



"Neither Molly nor Harklaw had the heart to tell him that they were neither engaged nor likely to be."

Preceding her around the angle of the wall at the back of the house, he came suddenly to a halt. It seemed that somebody else had been attracted by the board, for an elderly gentleman, with bent head and hands clasped behind him, was slowly pacing the back lawn.

III.

THE stranger cut an eccentric figure. There was a Victorian look about his clothes. His

apparition, the apparition suddenly became aware of their presence. The eccentric-looking stranger removed his hat with a sweep and made an obeisance deep enough to satisfy an Eastern potentate.

"I give you good afternoon," he said. "You will have come to see the house?"

"We were—er—just looking over it," Harklaw said.

"Just looking over it," remarked the stranger aloud to himself. "Good-looking young couple. Very good-looking young couple. Edwin and Angelina. Angelina and—ah!—Edward. Oh, dear me! Ah, Youth, Youth!"

He advanced towards them.

"A charming house, is it not? I regret that there is no caretaker. For certain private reasons I do not care to employ one. However, I shall be delighted to act in that capacity. Husband and wife, you will permit me to ask?"

"No," muttered Harklaw, taken aback.

"But going to be. Oh, most certainly going to be. Ah, Youth, Youth! Nesting-time! The spring of the year! Youth, Youth!"

"May I ask if you are the owner of the house?" Harklaw asked. "In that case I should wish to apologise for being here without a permit."

"No apologies are needed, sir. I am more than delighted to see you. Mr. Edwin—Miss Angelina—permit me to introduce myself, Mr. Mortimer Bigstraw."

"My name is Harklaw, sir."

"That makes no difference at all to me," retorted the stranger almost severely. "I shall not remember it. You are Mr. Edwin. She is Miss Angelina, and about to be Mrs. Edwin. Youth, Youth! Nesting-time! Spring of the year! Ah, yes!"

Neither of the young people could think of a word to say to him, but Mr. Bigstraw allowed no uncomfortable pauses.

"So you want my little house?" he said.

"Well, well, consider it settled. Must have a house. Nesting-time. Spring of the—My good sir and lady, we are very well met. I have been waiting for years for such as you. Youth, Youth! Tell the agents a purely nominal rent—a purely nominal rent for Edwin and Angelina, tell them."

"I'm uncommonly grateful to you, sir," said Harklaw, "but really we haven't decided—"

"No, Edwin—you will forgive the familiarity of the dropped prefix—no, Edwin, you may not have decided, but I have. Have you not wondered why so charming a house is on the market? I will tell you. There is no lack of would-be tenants or purchasers, but the landlord has his little say. And I have said 'No' to all of them. Why? Because Youth and Love must dwell once more in this sad old house."

He broke off and fell to muttering about Youth and nesting-time and the spring of the year.

"Many have wanted to buy or rent my old home," he resumed, "but I have said 'No'—men and women without souls, who do not know the meaning of love and laughter. But you, so young, so handsome, so deeply in love—you will forgive an old man's freedom of speech—you are the couple to grace the little house where I brought home my own little wife close upon forty years ago."

Both Edwin and Angelina—to give them their new names—had been struggling with embarrassment coupled with an inclination to laugh. But the old man had changed suddenly from a figure of ridicule to one of pathos. He brushed his eyes with his hand and repeated—

"Forty years ago!"

He coughed, blew his nose violently, and proceeded. "Youth, Youth! The spring of the year! I have never had the heart to live here since I have been alone. But on fine afternoons I love to wander here, and often I fancy I see my little wife tripping towards me down the garden paths as she did in the good times past. As the poet Swinburne says: 'I send my love back to the lovely time.' Tell me, did you see a swing among the trees in front of the house?"

"Yes," said Molly in a choked whisper.

"It is all rotting away now. I set it up for my poor little wife. I used to swing her there on summer evenings when the rooks were going home. I can see her now, in pink and white muslin, with her great broad-brimmed garden hat. Like a portrait by Gainsborough she looked, swinging there against that background of garden and trees. Such a happy little house it was then. Happy little house, and happy little garden! Youth, Youth! Somehow you two remind me of her and me as we were then. So it is no wonder—is it?—that I should wish you to live here in our stead. We go in our time, but Youth and Spring are eternal. Youth, Youth!"

He wiped away another tear. Molly was conscious that her own eyes were moist, and Harklaw felt far from comfortable.

"Let me show you the house," said Mr. Bigstraw in a subdued voice. "Every room is fraught with memories of my dear little wife, except, of course," he added unexpectedly, "the new bathroom!"

They followed him mutely inside, and in the kitchen he seemed to see his late wife

among the maids, superintending the household duties. He saw her in the hall, helping with Christmas decorations. He pointed out in the dining-room the spot where she used to sit at the end of the table. Still in his eyes she was in her chair on her favourite side of the drawing-room fireplace. The little morning-room had been her own sanctum; he described the flash of her needles as she plied them in the light from the window. Suddenly he turned and bowed and offered them each a hand.

"I will take my leave of you now," he said. "An old man knows that he is sometimes in the way. You will want to make your plans for furnishing my beautiful little home. I make no stipulations, but don't have any oilcloth. Oilcloth is so unromantic."

Neither Molly nor Harklaw had the heart to tell him that they were neither engaged nor likely to be. While each was thinking of some appropriate form of leave-taking, Mr. Mortimer Bigstraw continued:

"Go to the agents to-morrow and tell them that Mr. Mortimer Bigstraw says you are to have the house. Rent is no object. Youth, Youth! No, not a word from you, Edwin, nor you, Angelina. An old man's blessing follow you all your days. The spring of the year! Youth, Youth! Nesting-time! And don't forget—*no* oilcloth!"

He was gone. They heard him shuffling through the kitchen, muttering to himself. Harklaw looked after him, half smiling, but not a little touched. He turned to Molly.

"Angelina——" he began.

But there was a dull pain in Molly's heart, and the fear of some day growing old and being lonely. There were tears in her eyes, and, because she was hurt, she wanted to be kissed.

This Harklaw knew, through a telepathy known only among lovers, and as there was nobody present to kiss Molly but himself, he laid an arm around her slim shoulders and drew her to him.

"But you must promise not to d-die s-s-sixteen years before I do!" she sobbed a moment later, held tight in his arms.

I know the story ought to end here. Upon my word I wish it did. But I have set myself to write a true tale, and if the end be unpalatable it is no fault of mine. Nor am I to blame if the last scene be a commonplace one, to wit, the office of Messrs. Hardy, Turk and Toozer, auctioneers and estate agents, of High Street, Fortmouth.

Harklaw called there at eleven o'clock on the following morning. Mr. Toozer was a tall, slim young man in very light grey tweeds, with a most conspicuous collar.

"I see you have a house to let on the common," said Harklaw. "I should be prepared to take it from Michaelmas if we can come to terms. I was expecting my *fiancée* here to discuss the matter with you, but I expect she will be along in a minute."

"It's Moss Side that you mean, I think, sir. You've come along just at the right time. I don't mind admitting that we've had a great deal of trouble in letting that house on account of the water-supply. The well was always going dry. But by the time you're ready to move in, the new pumping station will be finished, and we can lay water on at the main."

"But I thought it was because Mr. Bigstraw——"

"Mr. Bigstraw! So you've seen him, have you? He's been a nuisance about that house. I believe he's driven several people away. But he's quite harmless in most things, mind you!"

"I suppose grief has unsettled his mind?"

"Grief? No! It was through being a great mathematician and taking to chess on top of it late in life. He was either a Senior Wrangler or a Junior Wrangler, I don't know which, and don't know the difference, not being an Oxford College man myself. Excuse me, sir, but did he tell you it was his house?"

"He—er—certainly did."

"Well, it belongs to Mr. Chudd, the butcher. That's one of the poor old chap's queer fancies. He thinks it's his house, and that he once lived there, and that he had a beautiful wife who died. He's always wandering about there, for he lives on the common quite handy and I make no doubt he believes his own stories. But he never did live there, and he never had a wife. It wasn't through getting married that he's like this. It all came about through mathematics and chess."

"O-oh!" Harklaw eyed the estate agent thoughtfully.

The estate agent chuckled.

"My *fiancée* will be along in a minute," Harklaw said. "If you don't mind, I'd rather you didn't tell her what you've just told me—at least, not just yet. She'd be—disappointed."

THE EGG

By MADGE S. SMITH

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT B. M. PAXTON

IT was kind, warm, mid-May, barefoot weather, two-garment weather.

Richard had been across the Common on some errand, and, returning, it seemed a waste of opportunity to pass the bathing pool without a dip. You needed no towel in two-o'clock sunshine. He had swum along the Little Water as far as there was water to float him, and then lay on his back in warm, wet weed, and watched a jolly water-rat who had bitten off a small lily-bud, and was under urgent need of getting it to a certain mud-hole across the current. Richard felt he must help the rat, and crossed over to give him a leg-up with it, but the rat slipped away in haste, and the lily floated away downstream and was lost. Then Richard lay on the close-bitten turf till he was nicely dry, but not too dry; and, lying so, with a world of summer happiness seething inside his sleek wet head, he saw something that made him jump for shirt and knickers, and start off into the bushes with his eyes as sharp and bright as the rat's own.

It was a bird that Richard had seen, a brown bird, bright-eyed, too, sturdy of build; sharp of bill, dealing dexterously with the dragon-fly that had mocked Richard, darting dexterously overhead, more free than even a boy in the water. He was so interested, he forgot to be sorry for the dragon-fly, though ordinarily it would have grieved him to see a gay fellow fall. The bird might have been a robin, but he was rather larger, and his breast was creamy buff where the crimson would have been, something like the inside of a throstle's wing. He cocked his head, sharpened his bill on a handy flint, and neatly jointed the dragon-fly above the thorax. Then he hopped briskly a few feet, paused, and darted into the thicket. After him, through blackthorn and bramble and briar, went Richard, all the savage that was in him rejoicing, because he knew that not far from here he should find ready to his hand that long-sighed-for egg of olive-green for which the

space of his well-filled egg-cabinet had waited, as he thought, hopelessly. There were several such empty spaces. A peregrine falcon seemed beyond the dreams of boyhood, so did the bee-eater and the honey-buzzard. So had, till this instant, the nightingale.

Richard did not notice that the nettles were stinging his sun-dried legs, or that the blackthorn was taking toll of his shirt. He crept on all fours through the thicket, and came out in a little pocket of short thymy turf, around which dog-roses were just opening their frail beauty unseen.

This was just the sort of thing Richard's little brother Ted used to sing about, before, at the age of six, he renounced the games of girls and "kids." "Ring a ring o' roses, a pocket full of posies."

The silly words are not meaningless to Hampshire children, who know very well that a pocket is a fertile little spot of rich river-silt in the surrounding chalk, and literally full of posies growing round in a fairy ring, to gain a way into which briars must be braved and clothes torn.

Richard crawled through on his belly and lay still, his chin cupped in his brown hands, watching. His patience was soon rewarded. The brown bird hopped boldly across the open and popped into a green bramble tangle not two feet from the ground. A few seconds later he was out again, paused alert, saw the intruder, and, flying to a tall, over-growing spray, poured forth a challenging of full-throated song. Richard's eyes bored into the thicket. It was not hard to see, once you knew where to look, that thickly-plaited tangle of dried bents, roughly padded with brown dry oak-leaves, and lined with the soft white hair from the old donkey on the Common, who furnished half the nests Richard was familiar with. He had to part the bush a little to see to the bottom of the nest. And there they were—three olive-green beauties, lying snug under the side. His fingers trembled with excitement as he cautiously thrust in his brown, scratched

hand. One was warm. He took the furthest from the warm one, deliciously cool in contrast, hid hand and all in his pocket, and stole guiltily away. Somehow he didn't want the bird to see him. He didn't want to stay about.

"I ought to take two." He paused, crawling through the prickly archway that led out of the thicket. "She can count even numbers. I ought to have taken two—or none. Suppose she forsakes!"

Too late to think about that now. He crawled out into the open. He sat down on the edge of the stream. He felt suddenly all hot and sticky with sweat. The cool comfort of his bathe had gone. He had scratched the calf of his leg, and his hair was full of brittle stalks.

He took out the egg. It lay on the palm of his hand, gently warming to the touch, green and strange. He had never glimpsed one before.

None of the boys at the Grammar School had one. It was just like the picture in his cabinet, but not quite as large, because a flat diagram of an egg always looks larger than the actual thing. His spirits rose. He had achieved the impossible. The honey buzzard, the bee-eater, even the majestic peregrine falcon, were now less dimly possible. He saw himself pulling out drawer after drawer of his cabinet, displaying their symmetrical completeness, the right egg in every compartment. He wondered why he was not more pleased about it. Why did he feel as if he was being watched? Why did he cover up the egg when a willow-warbler chattered close behind him?

He had nothing to be ashamed of. He had only taken one. He might have had two and still no harm done. He wasn't an ordinary nest-robbing little beast. He was a serious collector. He wouldn't spoil a nest, make the birds desert, for worlds.

Gracious! There went the cows to milking. It was Richard's job to get up the cows for his father on holiday afternoons. Young Ted was doing it to-day in his default. He followed old Clover up with a long peeled switch, shouting in a deep assumption of a manly voice that deceived none of those leisurely matrons into hurrying.

"Hello, young Ted!"

"Come on. Dad's ever so cross," quoth that seven-year-old. "Cows was right over the bridges. I had a job to get them up, I can tell you." Teddy raised an adoring face to his elder brother. His greatest pride and joy it was to render service to this

godlike and majestic elder, and Richard knew it. The chubby face glowed with pride as the story of his long struggle with the refractory herd continued. He was making the most of it. Richard listened with unusual attention. He was feeling, for some reason, a singularly lonely man. The company of Ted was a priceless thing in his mood. He tied up the cows and got ready for milking. Nothing was said about his being late, thanks to young Ted, but he still had that guilty feeling. His pocket with the egg in it seemed red-hot. He could easily have slipped into the house and put it away in his bedroom, but dreaded the quite unlikely question: "What did you go upstairs for?" He imagined everybody was noticing him. He might safely have laid it on the kitchen dresser, and said casually: "That's an egg I found." His mother did not know the difference between one egg and another. But he kept it in his pocket, and thought gloomily what risks of breaking it ran.

"See here, young Ted." Behind the barn, he called his young brother to him. "I'll show you something." He fished his precious secret forth, unfolded the grimy knotted handkerchief. "Ever see a night-ingale's egg, young Ted?"

Ted's big, brown eyes opened wide. He was enormously flattered. It was very seldom Richard honoured him with confidences.

"Did you climb for it?"

The tallest tree, the deepest pool, in Ted's eyes, were put there for Richard to climb and swim.

"Climb? No, it's down on the ground, stupid. I'll show you, p'r'aps. Near the bathing-place. It's a secret, mind. Nobody in the world knows that nest, only you and me."

Ted straddled his short dimpled legs, thrusting chubby fists deep in his pockets, manly pockets that almost atoned for the humiliating truth that his tunic fastened with "poppers."

"No fear. I won't tell. Are you going to blow it? Can I help?"

"Shut up!"

With a warning nudge and a crimson face, he pocketed the egg. His sister was crossing the yard. She murmured something about "eggs," making his heart leap wildly, but she was only after the old black hen with yellow legs, who had stolen a nest behind the cart-shed. She also said tea was ready. There was no chance now to

blow the egg before bed-time. Even then there would be no chance till George was asleep, and then it would be dark, and it was an operation that required a good light. He slipped into the parlour, when no one was looking but young Ted, and popped it as it was in its destined place in his cabinet. What a difference it made!

"Nightingale. May 29th. Not common in B.I."

It was something like a collection now. He must be up early, very early, and blow it before anybody else was about. Sure to make a mess of it, with George in bed there, likely to wake up any moment. You got flustered, and it was all up. And it always made a little gurgle.

Young Ted read his thoughts.

"If I get up awful early, can I be there when you blow it?"

"All right. Only keep your mouth shut, you little idiot."

Ted shut it, and nodded importantly.

* * * * *

It was not yet dawn when Richard awoke. He had been over-anxious to be up betimes. He sat up and rubbed his eyes in the mellow moonlight. His brother George slept heavily, his yellow hair shining. Richard had not known you could see colours by the moon. Everything in the house was very still. But the air was not still. It throbbed and thrilled and pulsed with music. The sound poured in with the moonbeams: it bathed Richard's very soul, without his conscious knowledge that it was going in at his ears. He gulped. His eyes were filled with tears, Richard's eyes, commonly held to be immune from tears. He sat up in bed, and rubbed his eyes hard with the sleeves of his night-shirt.

"I am an idiot. It's nothing but an old bird singing," he muttered angrily. "It isn't unhappy really. It's just the way the things sing. They don't mean anything."

It was absurd to assume that the bird had anything special to say to him, Richard, a good, hard, common-sense third-form grammar-schoolboy. He had been made, with some thirty similar schoolboys, to get by heart an "Ode to the Nightingale" by a Mr. Keats. Privately, Richard thought the ode had a lot more about Mr. Keats than about the bird, and there was no information in it about eggs, or where to look for them. Very likely Mr. Keats didn't know.

All the same—all the same—— Oh, bother

it! How did it go? Something about "Magic casements opening on the foam of perilous seas in faerie lands forlorn."

And that was nothing to do with nightingales, and nothing in the world to blub about. He wriggled into his clothes, and crept down barefoot into the parlour. It was darker there. The moon didn't come in, and the window was shut. He couldn't hear the silly bird. He opened his cabinet. His practised fingers counted the treasures gently over. The nightingale's egg was gone. For a second he stood in doubt.

Then he shinned upstairs to the cupboard-like recess which was dignified by the title of "young Ted's room." He saw bedclothes thrown back, and as he stood in silent wrath, through the little dormer window streamed the song of the bird. Young Ted was gone. It did not surprise Richard then to find the back-door unbolted, and across the yard to the Common gate he streaked, setting the ducks quacking as he went.

Bathed in faerie light the Common lay, the river all silver and gold, and a haze on the willows that shimmered softly, the cows lying across the path, breathing deep in their quiet dreams, as if no voice of unearthly beauty was thrilling and vibrating with something more than any words could tell. On it went, on and on and on, as if it had a whole world of loving and woe and wonder to relate. "And all the bits are different," thought Richard. "Now, where's that kid?"

He knew pretty well where to look, though. By the edge of the bathing pool he found young Ted, sitting there, his mouth open square, tears of woe streaming down his cheeks, wretched and unashamed.

"Hi, young Ted! You pinched my egg, you did!"

But young Ted was beyond the voice of reproach, even of threats. He got to his feet and pointed a stumpy finger, shaking with emotion, towards the elm-clump that overhung the bramble thicket.

"I couldn't find it. I got the egg, and I c-can't find the nest!" he wailed. "Give it back! Richard, listen at it. O-oh! Take it back! Where's the nest? Come an' put it back. Listen—just listen at it!"

Ted's lusty woe had momentarily made the nightingale inaudible, but he gulped it down, and clutched his elder brother by the sleeve with moist hands.

"You are a kid," said Richard. "I bet you've squashed it by now."

"I haven't."

The egg was produced safe and sound from Ted's night-shirt pocket.

"'S matter of fact," Richard admitted

his brother's. Richard was not mad with him, then. They were kneeling together on the brink of the river, and the placid



"With bated breath he followed to the nest, craned his neck to see one egg laid beside its brethren."

casually, "I was thinking of taking it back myself, and then I found you'd been and pinched it."

Starry with relief, young Ted's eyes met

stream reflected two little brothers, not so very much apart in point of size, and two chubby faces barred with tears,

"In here, in this egg, Ted, in here now,

just got to grow out of it, feathers and all. But it's here. It must be here. Fancy blowing all that out in a squidgy yellow mess! Come on. We'll shove it back."

Joyfully young Ted wriggled through the thicket on his belly, in the wake of, and more easily than, his thicker-set elder. With bated breath he followed to the nest, craned his neck to see the egg laid beside its brethren.

"Three. They've laid another since I pinched it," whispered Richard. "Wouldn't have mattered a bit, you see. But I don't care, young Ted. I don't *want* a nightingale's egg. Come on."

They were half across the Common before Richard spoke again to the small comrade plodding at his side.

"'S quite a jolly sort of row it's singing now, young Ted. Can't you hear? Cheerful and all that. Nothing about perilous seas and fairy lands in it now."

"Not a bit," agreed loyal Ted, not in the least comprehending, but feeling gloriously elate.

"Tell you what, young Ted, that Keats chap had been getting an egg. That was the idea. Faerie lands forlorn. I do wonder why, though. Hist! There's the cuckoo. Day's breaking."



A MOTTO.

IF life be but a little day
That hastes away
And ends at eve,
Oh, be ye kind ere curfew-bell
And say farewell
To friends at eve.

Now unto man let tongue forth tell
No word not well
Inclined to him,
For in the mute, long days to come
Ye shall be dumb
And blind to him.

But be ye kind of act and speech
That when ye reach
The end of all,
Some brother sayeth as ye pass:
"He's dead that was
The friend of all."

WILFRID THORLEY.

THE GOLF SWING DISSECTED

AN ACTION IN FOUR MOVEMENTS

By HARRY VARDON,

Six Times Open Champion

Illustrated from the Slow-Motion Film Study of Harry Vardon's Swing, by kind permission of Messrs. Pathé Frères Cinema Limited, and of the Proprietors of "The Evening News," for which this series of film photographs were made

THE principles of the golf swing, shorn of many small matters which need not here be emphasised, are very simple.

They can be learnt to some degree of advantage by anybody who cares to apply himself to the task. Certain it is that the golfer who does not learn them will find a great deal of exasperation in the game and very few streaks of enjoyment.

To all intents and purposes, the golf swing is an action in four movements. And here let it be said that although at the moment I am thinking particularly of the drive, the swing is in its many principles the same for any shot in the game. The only variations that occur come involuntarily from the distance that the ball has to be made to travel, and, consequently, the particular kind of club that the player selects and the length of back-swing that he makes preparatory to striking the ball.

But it is a fact that the little chip shot introduces, in effect, the swing for the full drive on a very much reduced scale. It is

merely the bigger shot which might send the ball 220 yards so minimised as to produce a shot of, perhaps, 30 yards. The strength of hitting is different, but the action is the same.

So let us now consider the four movements seriatim. The first thing that the golfer has to do is to move the club-head away from the ball, and for that reason I have always made it a point of instruction to pupils that the club-head must lead—that is to say, it must start to move back before the hands do so.

Examiners of the slow-motion film pictures of my swing have been declaring for some months that the cinematograph

has found me out. They proclaim that these slow-motion photographs show that, at the very start of the swing, my hands



THE START OF THE SWING.

"The photograph shows that my hands move before the club moves away from the ball."

move before the club moves away from the ball.

This is true, and I have known for a good many years of the existence of some such preliminary action, although only the slow-motion film has disclosed it in precise details. What happens is that, at the very beginning of the swing, my left wrist moves back, arching inwards, and naturally causing the right hand to recede with it. But so small an operation does not actually move the club-head away from the ball. It is only when this preliminary detail is complete that the left wrist begins to turn inward towards the body and thus to take the club-head away from the ball.

It may be true, as an observant critic has said, that the golf swing really begins at the left shoulder, which causes the receding movement of the left wrist. But although this interesting first movement is undisputed after the evidence of the screen, I am as certain as in the past that it is useless—



NEARLY AT TOP OF SWING.

"As to where the up-swing is to end is mostly a matter of the player's build. . . . Whatever the position of the club at the top, it marks the end of the second movement in the golf swing, and now we have to prepare for the third."



THE DOWN SWING.

"At this stage the main thing to remember is not to begin the down swing in a rush. Very many shots are ruined because of the tendency to snatch the club from the top of the swing and throw it forward in its first downward movement."

and worse than useless—to attempt to teach such a beginning. The golfer who set out deliberately to cultivate it would almost assuredly end in getting his wrist into a hopelessly locked position.

If he remembers that his business at the outset is to move the head of the club away from the ball, and that the way to secure this effect is to concentrate on turning the left wrist gently towards the body at the start of the swing, I believe that the film-picture discovery will assert itself in the living model without his striving for it. As to whether it is wholly essential is a nice point. At any rate, to teach people to practise it would be fatal. The A B C of golf learning consists of turning the left wrist towards the body so as to begin the backward movement of the club.

That accomplished, the thing to do is to take the club up at a moderate pace. "Slow back" is an ancient aphorism, but it is a valuable one. The thing to remember is



IMMEDIATELY AFTER IMPACT.

Observe the taut position of both arms, with the right hand climbing over the left.

not to overdo it. The operation should not be depressingly slow, as one sees it in many golfers who are unduly impressed by the importance of the principle. The pace at which Edward Ray, who is a very long driver, takes the club back is just about the ideal. Unfortunately, however, "slow back" does not indicate any definite time for the movement. I once heard a thinking golfer propound the idea that the club should go back to just such time and rhythm as will permit of the singing of "God Save Our Gracious King," and that is, perhaps, as near an indication as can be conveyed in words—and music.

As to where the up-swing is to end is mostly a matter of the player's build. Some people can raise the club with such facility that at the top of the swing it passes the horizontal and produces almost a swing and a half. Others of different physique are content with a three-quarter swing, which does not attain the horizontal.

Whatever the position of the club at the top, it marks the end of the second movement in the golf swing, and now we have to prepare for the third.

At this stage the main thing to remember

is not to begin the down swing in a rush. Very many shots are ruined—almost might one say one out of every three or four shots in golf—because of the tendency to snatch the club from the top of the swing and throw it forward in its first downward movement.

It is essential to recover the club quietly from its position at the top of the swing—to recover it as modestly as one started its upward movement. Nobody who had studied the art of golf would take the club away from the ball with a violent action of the arms. In just the same way it is desirable not to begin the down swing with a rush of the club-head.

The golfer should simply release the club-head from its position at the top of the swing by letting his right wrist guide it gently towards the right in the first fraction of a second—and guide it in a way that might almost suggest his desire to hit somebody standing a few inches



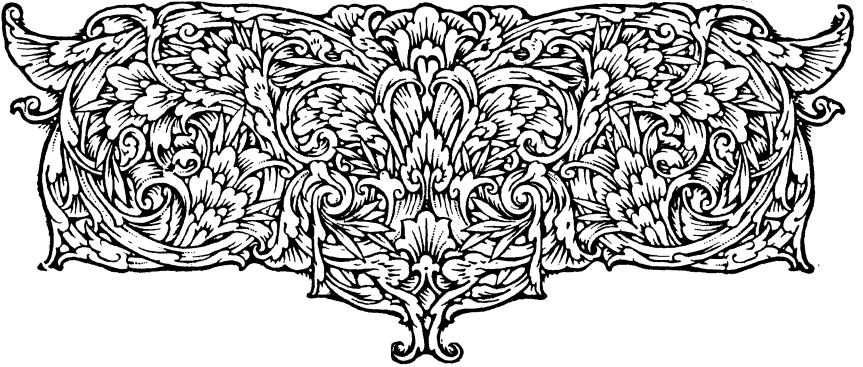
FINISH OF SWING.

Note relaxed body and position of knees,

behind him on his immediate right. That business of recovering the club-head having been achieved, the real action of hitting begins.

It is the fourth movement in the golf swing, and it marks the supreme letting loose of what hitherto has been controlled energy. From this stage the player must

hit for all he is worth. He must let himself go in an endeavour to accelerate the club-head to the utmost. It is the speed of the club gathered in this last second that produces length. And let him follow through. The player who can drive well and check the club immediately after the impact is a law unto himself.



MEMORY.

MY mind groped after a thought
That fled from its fingers;
But I know it was there when I closed my eyes,
And the memory lingers.

It came when music was playing,
Like a lovely dancer
It moved like a shadow before my mind,
And my lips gave answer;

They cried: "You are Beauty's self!
Stay, why do you fear us?
We worship naught in the world beside
While beauty is near us."

But the dancing figure went by
That my lips had bidden,
Like a shadow passing across a field
When the sun is hidden.

LEOPOLD SPERO.



GRINGO

By ARTHUR MILLS

ILLUSTRATED BY
GILBERT HOLIDAY

FOUR weeks after leaving England Victor Mendip found himself sitting on a grip-bag six thousand miles from home. An owl perched beside him on a post—one of the little brown day owls that are everywhere in Argentina.

The owl had its back to Victor, but its head was twisted completely round, and its little bright eyes never left his face. "Whee-oo! Whee-oo!" it piped.

"Wonder you don't twist your blinkin' neck off, getting in an attitude like that!" Victor addressed the bird.

"Whee-oo! Whee-oo!" replied the owl.

Victor felt vaguely that the bird was mocking him. He had had the suspicion he was being laughed at more than once since he landed in Argentina. That group of men over there by the station, wearing black slouch hats, silk handkerchiefs knotted round their necks, and baggy breeches tucked into half-length riding boots—peons, or *gauchos*, or whatever they were called—they were talking him over, he knew.

What was there odd about him, anyway? Surely he was not the first young Englishman who had come out to Argentina to learn the cattle business? He surveyed his extremely well-made breeches. Maybe, when they discovered he could ride just as well as they could, they'd be more respectful.

Victor was accounted a goodish horseman at home; he had won the light-weight race at the local hunt races. He was a nice-looking boy, and he had spirit. He had not cared to hang around at home, hunting and dancing. He had wanted to see a bit of the world, and had told his father so.

"All right," said his father. "How'd you like to go out to Argentina and do a spell on an estancia? You'll have to work, mind; they haven't time to entertain guests."

Victor thought he would like this very much.

"I'll cable Mackay and ask him if he'll take you on as a pupil," said his father.

Mendip Senior had made his money in cattle in the Argentine. He was a tough old man, almighty proud of his son. He wanted to do what was best for the boy. So when he got Mackay's answer, saying Victor could come out, he added a postscript to the letter he wrote fixing final arrangements.

"Catch 'em young and treat 'em rough," was what old Mendip Senior wrote.

Whereat Mackay, remembering the days when he and old Mendip had been gringos together, grinned.

Meanwhile Victor attended a series of farewell parties among his friends, got on board the R.M.S.P. *Arlanza*, slept off an accumulated headache crossing the Bay, flirted furiously with a girl who got on board at Lisbon and disappeared mysteriously at Rio, bumped up the mighty muddy River Plate, and landed in the Argentine. Now here he was, sitting on a sand track, along a single line of railway, beside an owl.

"Whee-oo! Whee-oo!" piped the bird.

"Oh, shut up!" said Victor.

Suddenly the owl turned its head. Victor saw a man on horseback coming down the track—a big fellow, wearing wide-flowing native riding breeches, a revolver strapped to his belt, and shirt open at the neck.

"Hullo, *che!*" said the big man, pulling up in front of Victor. "Been here long?"

"Couple of hours," answered Victor.

The big man nodded. "They 'phoned through from the station you'd come. Dalt's my name. I'm 'second' at the Tora."

Victor did not know what "second" meant, but he knew El Tora was the name of the estancia to which he was going.

"Is it far from here?" he asked.

"Four leagues," said the big man. "I've got a horse for you, and we'll get your stuff up later on. Wonder where that boy of mine is? I told him to be here an hour ago. In that *boliche*, I expect—yes, there are the horses." He pointed to a one-storied building, outside of which two horses were tethered to a post. "Hey, Pedro!"

A little dark-skinned man came to the doorway and, seeing Dalt, hurried to the horses.

"Jump on that one," said Dalt to Victor, pointing to a small chestnut horse; "we'll leave Pedro to bring on the traps."

Victor climbed up on the chestnut and fumbled his feet into the native stirrups. The horse had a native saddle, and his first impression was that he had never had his legs forced so wide apart before. A great, big clumsy thing, it felt, made up of layers and layers of sheepskins and saddle-cloths.

Dalt led the way, and they set off at a loping canter for El Tora. Though the sun shone hotly, the rolling green grass was restful to the eyes, and a fresh breeze blew.

"All this land belongs to El Tora," said Dalt.

Victor looked about him. They were riding through a great paddock. In a corner of the paddock a herd of cattle grazed—placid, white-faced Herefords as might have been seen on any English farm. As far as the eye could see, undulating grass-land stretched. Victor and Dalt rode side by side. Sometimes Victor glanced at his companion. Dalt was a fine figure of a man. The sun had bitten deep into his skin, tanning face, arms, neck dark cherry-red; his rolled-back sleeves exposed two powerful forearms; muscular thighs lay smoothly against the saddle. His eyes were very blue, with the look in them that comes into the eyes of men who spend their lives in great open spaces. Altogether a curious, arresting personality, Victor thought.

Gradually the "camp" began to throw its spell over him. Mile after mile of rich lush grass, thousands upon thousands of cattle, horses, sheep; at long intervals a clump of trees; a few peons here and there working cattle, but for the most part no sign of man. A great country, South America, greater than could be imagined by those at home. Victor congratulated himself he had chosen to come out instead of going into his father's London office.

"There's the Tora," said Dalt, breaking silence for the first time for half an hour,

pointing the silver knob of his *rebenque* at a clump of trees.

"Oh, we are there already!" exclaimed Victor.

"It is another league and a half," Dalt answered.

Victor supposed a league was three miles, in which case the estancia was still four or five miles away. He was surprised, for it looked only a few minutes' ride.

"I expect you'll have lunch with Don Donald, and he'll bring you over to your quarters later," said Dalt, when they were at last quite close to the estancia. "We'll go straight to his house."

"Is the boss a Spaniard?" said Victor.

"No, he's Scotch—Donald Mackay—but out here the peons and servants always call the head of the house by his Christian name. If a chap is Charles, they'll call him 'Don Carlos'; we get into the way of doing it, too. There is the boss at the door."

As they got off their horses, Mackay came forward. "How are you? Come inside." He gripped Victor's hand.

Victor looked at the man under whom he was to work for the next two years. Mackay stood about five feet four, a square-chested stocky little man with keen grey eyes and a stubbly chin. Like Dalt, he carried a revolver on his belt, and wore native riding breeches. He led Victor through a room where a table was laid for three, out on to a red-tiled verandah.

"Well, what do you think of Entre Rios?" he asked, as they settled themselves in two long chairs.

"A great country, from what I've seen of it."

"It is. Your father discovered that. He built this place. He's a fine fellow, your father. We worked together when we first came to this country." Mackay took a stopper from a decanter and poured some dark liquor into two tumblers.

"Gea!" he called, then louder, "Gea!"

A girl came out on the verandah.

"Gea, this is Mr. Mendip, who has come out to us—my niece." He introduced the pair.

The girl was about eighteen; she had a clear olive skin and large dark eyes. "Half or wholly Spanish," thought Victor, wondering how she came to be Mackay's niece.

"She's my brother's child," Mackay explained. "My brother married a Spanish girl; but Gea likes the English, don't you?" He patted his niece's hand.

Gea was something completely new to

Victor; he discovered at lunch that she not only had never been out of South America, but that, in spite of her British father, she only spoke English with difficulty. Her father had died when she was quite small, and she had been brought up entirely among Spanish-speaking folk. But for a chance visit to her uncle's estancia, she would probably have married an Argentine and forgotten all her British associations.

All the topics of conversation at Victor's command were Greek to Gea. She just sat there, her dark eyes watching him solemnly, seeing that he had bread, butter, vegetables, and the things he wanted.

"After tea Gea shall take you a ride," said Don Donald. "She can tell you as much about cattle as most of us. You'd like to go to your quarters now."

The assistants' quarters lay on the opposite side of the patio. Dalt was sitting on the verandah, reading some old English papers. He looked up as Victor approached.

"Had lunch?"

Victor nodded. "Think I'll unpack. Miss Mackay is going to take me round the place after tea."

"Gea is?" Dalt said.

"Yes. Don Donald said she knew nearly as much about cattle as he did."

"So she does; she's a real 'camp' girl."

The big man folded his paper and started to cram some tobacco into a pipe.

"Have you been out here long?" Victor asked.

Dalt nodded. "Ten years. I haven't been off the estancia for twelve months."

"That's a long spell," said Victor.

At half-past four Victor and Gea set out. The heat of the day was over; a pleasant breeze blew.

"I will take you to see the river, no?" said Gea. She ended most of her sentences with "No," after the Spanish-American fashion.

"I'm in your hands," Victor answered, thinking how extremely well she looked on a horse.

Gea patted her grey's neck. "One month since I ride him. Before that no one ride him, only the domador for one day when they first catch him!"

"You are breaking him in yourself."

"No, the domador do that; he put the saddle on his back the first time and make him keep it there. I ride him now. You will ride a *potro*, I expect."

"What's a *potro*?"

"A horse that have a saddle on his back

for the first time. After one day they are quite tame; but the first time they feel a man on their back they go mad, mad."

"I dare say they do," said Victor, thinking of the long, patient training an English horse received before even been shown a saddle. "Do you mean they catch a wild horse, saddle him up, and ride him the same day?"

Gea nodded, looked over her shoulder and whistled. "Chuka! Chuka!" she called.

A shaggy-haired terrier came pounding along.

"He's a good dog for *bichos*," said Gea.

"What's a *bicho*?"

"Any little animal—armadillo, possum, skunk—that live in the 'camp.' Chuka will find some, you will see."

Her English, spoken with the Spanish accent, was quite fascinating. Victor found himself watching her lips. She met his appraising glance utterly unconsciously.

The sun had set, leaving only a pale glow above El Tora when they got back. It had been a delightful ride, Gea prattling away about the cattle, and the peons, and life on the "camp."

"What a crime it would be to take a girl like that back and make her live in London!" thought Victor. "Like bringing home some little wild animal to the cages of the Zoo."

He and Dalt dined together. Henceforth they were to be mess mates, only going over to Don Donald's house on special occasions. Dalt spoke little during dinner, and, after smoking a pipe, said he was going to bed. Victor, looking at his watch, saw it was not nine.

"We turn in early because we get up early here," Dalt explained.

"What time do you get up?"

"Half-past four. The peons are supposed to be at work by five. We are parting some cattle to-morrow three leagues from here, so we shall have to start at four a.m."

The days went by so quickly that they seemed only hours. During this time Victor saw little of Don Donald and nothing of Gea. Secretly Don Donald was carrying out old Mendip's instructions and trying the boy out.

"Keep him at it," he told Dalt, "and let me know how he shapes."

Dalt in his quiet way carried out his instructions. He soon found Victor needed no driving, and was willing enough to keep moving as long as his legs would carry him. More than once Victor came in from a long



"Dalt landed on his feet—a trick only a few of the surviving *gaucho* horsemen can still perform."

day so tired that he went straight to bed without his dinner.

In the meanwhile all that Victor learnt about Dalt in this time increased his respect for him. Dalt's mind was simple to the point

of being primitive; he had spent ten years with cattle, and it was of cattle he thought morning, noon, and night. His brain worked as slowly as the slow-moving herds, but his accumulated knowledge was inexhaustible.



"Head over heels he fell, right in front of the wire."

He could ride round a *rodeo* of two or three hundred steers and estimate to within a few dollars their market value. He possessed a mesmeric influence over Tora Splendid, the

valuable but ill-tempered prize bull, who had already "horned" three men. The great lumbering brute would follow Dalt about like a puppy.

"We are dining with the boss to-night," Dalt said on a Saturday just a fortnight after Victor's arrival.

"Capital! I hope Miss Gea will be there."

Dalt made no answer.

"She's one of the prettiest girls I've seen for a long time," Victor continued. "Don't you think so?"

"She's the only girl I've seen for twelve months," answered Dalt.

"Good Heavens!" thought Victor, suddenly remembering what Dalt had told him. "Poor chap, I suppose he has forgotten how to talk to a girl. Don't expect he takes much interest in 'em, anyway."

Victor looked forward to the party. He had not seen a white woman of any sort for a fortnight, and it would be a treat to sit opposite a pretty girl. His own anticipations caused Victor to forget the other man, who had been living out on the camp for a year.

Gea was on the verandah, waiting for them, when they went over. Don Donaldo was changing, she explained. Her dark hair was gathered low on her neck, her white clear skin untouched by any colouring. The black silk frock she wore clung to her supple young figure. Victor thought her twice as pretty as the first time he had seen her. His eyes kept travelling in her direction.

Dalt hardly looked at Gea. He kept his eyes on the ground and seemed more awkward and tongue-tied than usual.

"Not used to women, living out here as he has done all this time," thought Victor. "I'll do the talking for both of us."

He started to talk, rattling along about his week's experiences. Gea listened gravely. Once a little puzzled frown gathered in her brows at something he said about some cattle.

"He means those three-year-old heifers in Paddock One," Dalt explained.

Victor corrected himself. How frightfully serious these "camp" people were about cattle! Gea seemed to be just as serious as Dalt.

He changed the subject. "May I have the pleasure of another ride with you to-morrow?" he asked.

She looked across at Dalt. Dalt was bending over the terrier Chuka, and did not look up. At this moment Don Donaldo came in, and took Dalt into his office to show him a letter. Victor and Gea were left on the balcony.

The moon shone down on Gea's face. Victor looked at her round white arms, at her dark hair, at her fresh red lips, and

an impulse age-old and primitive stirred him.

"I want to ride with you to-morrow," he said eagerly.

She sat quite still, her eyes full on him. There was allurements in her impassivity. Could any girl be so utterly unconscious of her beauty? He leant forward. In another minute his hands would have held one of those white arms.

"Hullo, here you are!" a voice interrupted. Looking up, Victor saw Dalt.

"I am trying to persuade Miss Mackay to take me for a ride to-morrow."

"We'll all ride," Dalt answered.

He, too, spoke differently; there was a challenging ring in his voice—a primitive echo, as it were, from the great cattle-bearing plains.

They went to bed. Victor slept fitfully. He was conscious of being up against something different from the small difficulties that he had encountered in his love affairs at home. They were just the two of them out in the great open spaces wanting the same girl. That Dalt wanted Gea was now plain to Victor.

The next morning the three set out. Gea rode between the two men.

"Where are we going?" she asked.

"The peons are riding some young colts in Number Four Paddock. Shall we go down and watch them?" Dalt suggested.

"*Potros*. Yes, that would be fun. Mr. Mendip has never seen a *potro* ridden."

Dalt looked at Victor and nodded. Victor fancied he saw a slightly contemptuous twinkle in the "second's" eye. It irritated him. Why should everyone laugh at him just because he was a gringo, new to the country? An idea came to him. By Jove, he'd ride one of those *potros* and show what he could do! At Oxford he had been considered a good horseman, one of the whippers-in to the drag and in the polo team. He'd have as good a chance of sitting one of these colts as anyone.

They came to the paddock just as a *potro* was being caught. The *potro* was a chestnut colt. A peon was galloping after him, in and out among the loose horses, whirling a lasso round his head. Waiting his moment, the peon flung the lasso round the colt's neck. At the touch of the rope the colt began to fight violently. Gea and Dalt watched.

"That's a bad-tempered brute," said Dalt; "whoever rides him will get a rough passage."

"May I try?" Victor asked.

Dalt nodded and beckoned to a peon. "The English señor would like to ride the *alazan* (chestnut horse)," he said.

The peon answered at length in Spanish.

"He asks if you have ridden a *potro* before, and suggests you should begin on a quieter horse; that chestnut will give a lot of trouble, he says," Dalt translated.

"I'll take a chance on him," Victor answered.

The chestnut was now stretched on the ground, lassoed neck and hind legs, like a steer. A man bent over, fastening the *bocado* (strip of raw-hide leather) round his lower jaw, which answered as bit and bridle. This done, the *potro* was allowed to rise, and a man clamped a saddle on his back. The animal, half strangled by the lasso, submitted passively.

"All right; they are ready for you," said Dalt.

Victor smiled at Gea and went towards the *potro*. The peon looked at him, studying his yellow-balled English breeches, long straight polo boots, and spurs. The latter, a pair of ordinary short hunting spurs, attracted the attention of a grizzled old *gaucho*. He came over to Victor, holding his own spurs in his hand. They were the most enormous spurs Victor had ever seen, with four-inch rowels at least. Victor pointed to his own spurs and shook his head. The *gaucho* spoke in Spanish, and the others round him laughed. Victor laughed, too, but again shook his head, whereupon the *gaucho* shrugged his shoulders and withdrew.

For a moment Victor and the colt faced each other. A hundred demons of revolt flashed from the animal's eyes. Victor tried to gentle it and dodged by hair's breadth a savage forward strike. To get up on the brute's back at all was not going to be easy. However, after a little manœuvring he managed to mount. The colt stood absolutely rigid. A peon came forward and loosened the lasso. Victor took a firm grip with his knees, and waited. He had not to wait long.

"Ee! Ah!" called a peon. Thwack! Thwack! A couple of *rebenques* came down on the colt's flank, and the fun began.

For an ordinary buck Victor was prepared, but he'd never have guessed any horse capable of the evolution in the air that colt performed. Head down between its knees, back arched to a semicircle, it threw itself off the ground like an acrobat from a spring-

board, and when in mid-air gave a wicked sideways kick. The sideways kick did it. Victor came off. He fell heavily. A sharp pain told him he had landed on an old patched knee-cap. He got up and hobbled towards the colt. They helped him in the saddle once more, and the battle was renewed.

"Anyway," he thought, "this will prove to the girl I'm as good a chap as Dalt."

He was ready for the sideways kick this time, and the second attempt left him secure. A test of endurance now began; the colt bucked and Victor hung on, while the peons yelled. After several minutes of this the maddened animal leapt forward and galloped over the plain. Two peons ranged out one each side of Victor, yelling at the colt and beating it with their *rebenques*. Victor called to them to stop, but they took no notice, and away the three tore at breakneck speed. Victor had lost both stirrups and his knee-cap was hurting; however, he clung on. Suddenly, in full career, the colt stopped dead. Victor left the saddle and fell six feet in front of its head.

When he recovered consciousness, he was propped against a fence, with Gea bending over him. A hundred yards away he saw Dalt on the chestnut colt. The animal now was cantering in a circle docile as a lamb. After a few minutes Dalt got off and came over to Victor and Gea.

"Any the worse?" he asked Victor.

Victor was not sure if he had broken every bone in his body or only a few. However, he managed to grin and say that he was all right.

"I'm going to ride one or two more of these youngsters," said Dalt, turning away; "they are rather fun."

"Fun! Heavens!" thought Victor.

"You do not ride any more?" Gea looked at him. There was an expression in her eyes he did not understand; possibly it was sympathy that he had had such a shaking.

She looked away to where Dalt had just got on a black horse. The animal was a wicked-looking brute, and lived up to its appearance. After bucking for ten minutes in a manner enough to shake the teeth out of a man's head, it took a sideways run at a palisade in the hope of crushing Dalt's knee. Dalt sat quite still, and at the moment of impact with the fence put out his *rebenque* so that the colt drove the butt of it into his own shoulder. Finally the colt bolted as the chestnut had done with Victor,

only, unlike Victor's horse, instead of making for the open, headed straight for the wire fence where Victor and Gea were sitting. To Victor it seemed certain that Dalt must break his neck. Horrified, powerless to help, he looked at Gea. To his amazement she was quite unperturbed—indeed, she was watching Dalt in critical semi-detached manner, just as the women of Spain watch the toreador take his life in his hands.

Dalt had evidently realised his danger, for he was doing all he could to turn the colt. He took a mighty grip of the raw-hide rope leading from the *bocado* and pulled. It was a fight between the strength of horse and man. The muscles knotted in his fore-arms. Slowly, inch by inch, the colt's head came back. Still horse and man charged on towards the wire. Twenty yards from the wire Dalt suddenly flung the whole weight of his body backward, till his head nearly brushed the colt's quarters. It was a mighty pull; something had to go—raw-hide rope, horse's jaw, man's arm. And something

went—to wit, the colt, his head pulled clean round his forelegs. Head over heels he fell right in front of the wire.

Dalt landed on his feet—a trick only a few of the surviving *gaucho* horsemen can still perform. Victor looked at Gea. Her eyes, fixed on Dalt, shone with admiration. In that moment he knew instinctively which was her man.

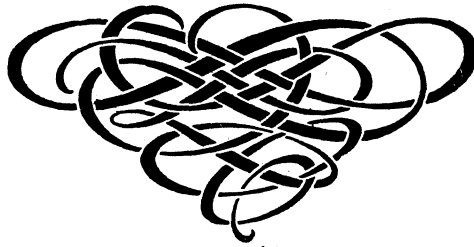
A year or two later he told his father about his first ride on a *potro*.

"And you didn't get up and ride another?" said his father.

"Not that day," Victor laughed.

"Why, man, you should have done that, just to show it was the saddle's fault. They've no excuse out there for a man who falls off a horse. The peons would think nothing of you."

"So I discovered," replied Victor, who was not thinking of the peons at the time, but of what Christmas present to send his godchild, the twelve-months-old daughter of the Dalts.



IN THE BELL TOWER.

MIDWAY we paused in the cathedral tower
 Amid the dusty quiet and softened light;
 Sudden, above, a huge bell clanged the hour:
 The throbbing air thrilled all the winding height.

Then as we mounted through that echoing swell,
 It came to me how like that tower am I,
 And how my beating heart is like that bell—
 So loud with resonant love as you go by.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.



THE POINT OF VIEW.

TOMMY (to father, whose toe is being nipped by a crab): Be jolly careful, dad, or you'll go and lose it!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE DERBY LOSER.

By Edward F. Spence.

"MR. BLEAKS will play with you, sir," said the caddie master on my first visit to our links—"the gentleman who lost forty thousand pounds on the Derby."

"I'm afraid," I replied, "he'll want to play a fiver a hole."

"Oh, no, sir," was the answer. "Not even a ball on the match. He's given up betting now, and night time, too."

My opponent, an abominably steady eighteen handicap, did not in manner or appearance correspond with my vague ideas of fierce gamblers. A middle-aged, middle-sized man, distinguished by mutton chop whiskers: a dull, taciturn fellow.

After our game he took a "gin and tonic" at my expense, and I tried to draw him about the great Derby gamble. Almost a blank. All I got was a pained look and the curt reply: "Yes, over Champagne Standard—forty thousand pounds."

At different dates I spent several gin and tonics on him—without what one may call a technical response—in a vain effort to learn more of the gorgeous wager. Queer that his fame as a tremendous sportsman had made a big figure of him—probably was the reason

why he was on the committee of the golf club, lawn tennis club, bowls club, and even the horticultural society.

An unmarried man, he lived quietly, but decently, in a small house with a small garden near the course, and with a small servant and small car.

The other day, when going along quietly in the small car, as a decent man should, he met a large car driven by a road-hog. At the inquest there was a reference—by the coroner—to our respected fellow-citizen, a popular man who lived an amiable, blameless life, despite a great tragedy in his early days.

Last week, when I was in Town for the Bart's celebration, I learnt the secret of Mr. Bleaks and the forty thousand pounds gamble. I happened to mention his name and death, when gossiping about our Shropshire village with an old school-fellow named Jenkins.

"What—old Bleaks dead? I spent a dreadful week with him, the year Champagne Standard won the Derby."

"You mean lost the Derby," I said. "Bleaks lost forty thousand pounds on him; everyone knows that."

Jenkins laughed till his face became purple and his eyes seemed likely to fall out. At last he gasped: "So that's the legend is it?" And then he began his story. "He and I were

friends, articulated clerks in the same office, and admitted as solicitors at the same time. A sober, dull dog, but quite a good sort. You remember—or have forgotten—a big stunt was done for a charity that year, though the ugly word 'stunt' wasn't used, of course. They got up an immense Derby sweepstake very late in the day, such a success that the first prize was fifty thousand pounds, and the authorities kept the police quiet—personal influence, it was said, of tremendous personages. At a dinner old Bleaks was caught by a canvasser, and took a ticket, and was very bitter about it next day. 'Never won a bet and never touched a sweepstake or a raffle since I won a pistol as a school-

the paper, Champagne Standard was in the betting at fifty to one. Old Bleaks jumped when he saw that. 'You could get a lot for him,' said I. 'Will you give it?' he answered, but I shook my head. On the arrival of the evening paper, the horse had dropped to thirty-three, and next morning was at twenties.

"Old Bleaks refused to fish, and went for a country walk alone, getting back in good time for the evening paper. Fifteen to one! And next morning, 'Favourite strained a tendon,' and Champagne Standard at seven to one!"

"I don't quite see—" I interrupted.

"Shut up!" said Jenkins. "Who's telling this story, you or I? Pass the bottle."



READY FOR THE FRAY.

"HULLO! What's the fencing mask for? Going to a tournament?"
 "No, bargain sale."

boy, which burst and blew off two of my fingers."

"A few days later," continued Jenkins, "old Bleaks and I went to Southend for a quiet week's holiday—country walks and fishing for dabs from the wooden pier that resembles Harley Street in its length. By post the second morning he got a letter to say he'd drawn a horse named Champagne Standard, and we promptly scrambled for the morning paper. The horse was not named in the betting or even as a starter. 'Just my luck,' said he; 'serves me right.' And we spent a quiet day's fishing, and caught a lot of dabs—jolly good when cooked fresh.

"Next morning I was down first, and lo, by

"That day," he continued, "I bullied Bleaks and made him fish, but he seemed mazed, stuck hooks in his fingers, dropped his knife and disgorged into the water, didn't notice bites. About midday a man came along the pier, a gaudily-dressed fellow with a big pearl, or pearlsh, pin in a black satin tie, and a coarse red face. 'One of you gents named Bleaks?' he called out.

"That's my name," replied my companion solemnly.

"Mine's 'Obbs, George 'Obbs.' I fancy that part of his name fell between the planks into the water each time he tried to mention it. 'I'm a bookie, and they call me "Old Sharp and Straight." You've drawn Champagne Standard

in the charity sweep, and I fancy 'im. I've come to buy 'im. What's yer price ?'

"Bleaks—I've forgotten his Christian name—answered frigidly that he did not propose to sell.

"Mr. Hobbs offered five thousand pounds, and there followed a prodigious discussion, of which I only heard scraps, for there was a draught of fishes—a marvellous draught for Southend. Still, I heard the offer rise till it reached ten thousand pounds, and then Mr. Hobbs emphatically stated his desire to die if he offered another tanner.

"What ought I to do, Herbert?' said old Bleaks to me. I knew that he was then getting three pounds a week and had no private means. 'I wouldn't give an opinion,' I answered with amazing wisdom, 'if you offered me one hundred pounds.'

"They went at it again, and the fish continued to bite. At last the stronger will prevailed. Mr. Hobbs produced a cheque book. Bleaks and I took splendid precautions against fraud, and by midday next Saturday Bleaks had ten thousand pounds at his father's banking account, and the bookie held a sort of deed of trust of the ticket in the sweepstake. The next few days were awful. Bleaks, of course, hoped fiercely that Champagne Standard might die or break a leg. But it didn't; it stiffened—I think that's the correct word—in

the betting, and Bleaks raved, and bored me and the landlady, and her Irish slavey, and the postman, and, indeed, everyone he met, with his talk about the race, and sent telegrams to London and bought copies of all the papers he could get. On the Monday I went back to Town, because of the sudden illness of my mother. Bleaks came, too. I begged him not to go to the Derby, fearing some catastrophe if Champagne Standard won.

I had to stick by my mother, who, however, got better. When I saw that the horse had won I trembled. It was on the Thursday evening that I next met him. He looked years and years older. 'I've lost forty thousand pounds over that cursed horse,' he shouted at me—'forty thousand pounds!' Whilst we were talking it over, and I was trying to make him reasonable, the maid—Bleaks and I lived in 'digs' together



THE TROPHY.

ANGRY FATHER: Why didn't you go to the office to-day? You haven't the least bit of interest in the business which is to be your livelihood. You prefer to waste your time playing table-tennis.

SON (hurt): Not waste, father—I won this tea cosy.

in Mortimer Street—staggered into our little sitting-room with a wooden case. 'Yeuve Clicquot' was marked on it, and a label attached, 'With the compliments of Mr. Hobbs.' A good sort, George 'Obbs. Bleaks kicked it furiously and hurt his foot. 'Take it,' he yelled, 'to the British Museum and say it's for the mummies!'

"Bleaks was forced by his father to buy an annuity with the money. We drifted apart not

long after. He never did any good—or harm—in the profession, and retired early in life on the annuity. And that's how old Bleaks lost forty thousand pounds on the Derby."



UNCLE ROOFS THE SHED.

WHEN Uncle Thomas came round one Saturday looking for a job of work, Mother politely indicated a large and heavy roll of tarred roofing felt which she said ought to be fixed on the shed roof at once if the lawnmower was to be saved from utter ruin. "I'll attend to it," said Uncle. "I don't know what

tastefully decorated from head to foot with tar and sand.

We don't quite know how it happened, as Uncle is reticent on the subject, but we can only assume that in the last desperate encounter the felt got the best of it.

R. H. Roberts.



"STERILISE the tin-opener" is the advice given in a recent article in a contemporary on spring cleaning. It is also advisable to boil the toasting-fork, disinfect the corkscrew, and revaccinate the nutmeg-grater. Nutcrackers should be fumigated after every use, and grape-scissors quarantined.



THE LETTER MORE AND HOW MUCH IT IS!

VISITOR: Now, you can tell me this, Jim: which is correct, to say a hen is sitting or setting?

OWNER: That's not what worries me, old man. When I hear a hen cackling I want to know whether she is laying or lying!

you'd do without me." Having got the stuff into position after a painful struggle, he descended for the hammer, whereupon it curled up into its original form, and rolled down into the next-door garden, crushing out of existence a bed of very choice tulips. Although no encore had been demanded, the performance was again repeated, only this time the roll came down on our side, and put the charlady, who was holding the steps, out of action.

As the roofer appeared to be losing his nerve, we decided to watch the operations no longer. When Mother went to call him in to tea, the roll of felt was lying on the ground, but Uncle Thomas had disappeared mysteriously. Subsequently he was discovered inside the roll,

MILLINERY bedecked with tears is now very popular. Are these meant to be symbolical of the tears which hubby sheds when he sees the bill for the new hat?



It has been suggested that no live animals should be allowed to appear on the stage. Soon they will only allow tinned salmon and potted shrimps to appear in aquariums.



"I SEE Mrs. Newfangle's spring costume is decorated with those fashionable mushrooms."

"Oh, my dear, I expect they are only toadstools!"

BELINDA "BLOWS IN."

By Ada Leonora Harris.

THERE were half a dozen or so of them sitting with their heads together when Belinda "blew in."

"What are you conspiring about?" she inquired, after she had distributed pecks all round.

"We are going to get up a little entertainment in aid of the unemployed. We think of doing a little play called——"

"I'll help," broke in Belinda. "I am glad I blew in. But don't have a play——"

"But we'd almost decided to——"

"Wait a bit, Kitty. I know what people like better than you do. If you want to get up a really attractive show, have tableaux——"

"There is a little sketch called 'Love in Lodgings' which we thought would——"

"Do let me speak, Milly! To begin with, you don't need a regular stage for tableaux—just a platform and a picture frame arrangement with curtains to draw together. Of course the great thing is to pose well and keep your countenance——"

"I'm sure I should laugh——"

"I do wish you would let me finish what I'm saying, Elsie. If you've none of you acted in tableaux before, it will be all the more interesting. I know a lot of charming subjects.

To begin with, we might have something quite simple, like 'Three Little Maids from School' from 'The Mikado.' I know of a perfectly sweet kimono, embroidered with storks and almond blossoms, I

could borrow for myself. And the style of hairdressing suits me——"

"But I'm sure it wouldn't suit *me*. And I haven't anyone to lend *me* a kimono embroidered in storks and——"

"If you would *only* let me finish, Marjorie! Then we could have 'Auld Robin Grey,' in two scenes, by way of contrast, with, perhaps,



CROWDED OUT.

"So the R.A. rejected this, Mr. Dauber. Did they give any reason?"
 "Yes—'want of space'!"

'Pygmalion and Galatea' to follow. I'll be 'Galatea.' The costume is only white nun's veiling damped to make the folds more classical and clinging. We shall have to dig up some

men. My cousin Jack would do for one, and there's Bob Harvey for another——"

"But you're talking as though we had quite decided to have tableaux instead of——"

"And so we have, haven't we, Gladys? Why, how changeable you are! And you've made me forget what I was talking about. I had a splendid idea, and it's gone. Oh, I remember! It's that picture of Millais' where the girl is trying to tie a white scarf round the man's arm. 'The Eve of Saint Bartholomew,' I think, is the name of it. Bob would be just the figure for the man, and I could be the

horse to look like it. All the same, I'd rather do a play than——"

"What a tongue you have, Mabel! A play wouldn't be half the fun. And I should have to prompt you all the time I wasn't on the stage myself, as well as——"

"Indeed you wouldn't. What's more, we hadn't the slightest intention of asking you to take part in——"

"Well, Elsie, you might let me get a word in, though I'm sure none of you seem particularly grateful for the trouble I'm willing to take. Well, I can't stay any longer,



UP-TO-DATE.

CADDIE (condemned to wear a pair of father's reconstructed trousers): Well, what's up wiv yer? This the first pair o' plus fours yer ever seen?

girl. Then we might have the balcony scene from 'Romeo and Ju——'"

"But how would you manage the bal——"

"Please let me finish, Lucy. You can have your say afterwards. The balcony would be quite easy. A packing-case or a kitchen table for me to stand on——"

"Why, do you mean to say you want to be Juliet, as well as Galatea and one of the 'Three Little Maids from——'"

"How you *do* chatter, Kitty! Of course, if you want to take the part, you can. But I hardly think your nose—you needn't look at me like that. I can't help the shape of your nose. But, as I was saying when you put in, something solid to stand on, with a clothes-horse draped with ivy, and some pots of ferns arranged at the bottom, would be quite all right. I think there ought to be a cow for 'Auld Robin Grey.' But I may be able——"

"To borrow one, or else drape the clothes-

as I've several other calls to make. Of course there is a lot to arrange still, and we shall want a lot of rehearsals. But you've all chattered and hindered so. Good-bye."

She pecked them all round again, and blew out.



THE CUCKOO (surveying a forest of aerial masts): Well, they are going to make sure of hearing me this season. What a thing it is to be so popular!



"PLEASE will you lend father your lawn-mower?"

"But your father hasn't any lawn."

"No, but we are spring-cleaning, and he wants to trim up the fur rug."



THE CREATURE OF CIRCUMSTANCE.

"Excuse me, old man, but where on earth do you get your hats?"
 "In restaurants, as a rule, but this one was left me at church."

FIRST-AID.

By E. Spencer.

MARY had dispensed tea and Rosamond was taking her leave. It was a lengthy process; many subjects crop up just as one has to say good-bye.

"The first-aid lectures were a great waste of time," said Mary.

"Do you think so? I really enjoyed them. The doctor was so nice."

"Oh, I quite agree with you there, but I've

never seen a single accident since I took the course."

"How provoking! Now you mention it, I think I've seen only one. I don't know what it was, because I fainted when I saw the crowd. A policeman carried me into a shop while the others attended to the case. It was most interesting; he was such a big, strong man."

By this time Mary and her visitor had reached the gate.

"Look!" gasped Rosamond, clutching wildly

at her friend's arm and turning ghastly pale. Following the direction of the trembling finger, Mary saw the huddled figure of a man lying on the pavement not many paces away.

"At last," she exclaimed, "and at my very door!"

"I believe you're glad," said Rosamond.

"Of course I'm not," returned Mary, "but it's a chance to practise first-aid."

"Oh, oh, I think I'm going to faint!"

"You're not to, Rosy," said Mary firmly.

"You must help me to get that poor man indoors, and then run for a doctor. Come along. You take the feet, and I'll take the head." With palpitating hearts they tiptoed towards the recumbent man, Rosamond glancing from her own white kid gloves to his dirty work-a-day trousers. His back was towards them, the left arm lay limply across the thigh, but the right was out of sight. He did not stir as they approached. From afar came a cry of "Off again!" Though faint, it startled the girls as they bent over their victim.

Gentle hands seized his knees and shoulders. He stirred, kicked, and sat up on the pavement. As if by magic, his right arm appeared from a hole in the ground. Amusement was written on every feature.

"You—you're not ill?" stammered Mary.

"No, miss," grinned the patient. "I was only a-turnin' of this stopcock."



BOSWELL UP-TO-DATE.

I REMARKED to Doctor Johnson that the girls of the present day were lacking in many of the good qualities of the previous generation, and ventured the opinion that bobbed hair and the modern mode of dress marked a degeneracy in female nature.

"Sir," said Doctor Johnson, "you are only telling me what your great-grandmother said about your grandmother. A woman does not bob her brains when she bobs her hair, and as for the dress to which you make objection, I warrant you would not be well pleased to meet the dowdy creatures from a fashion plate of twenty years ago during your walks in town."

I reminded Dr. Johnson that although the modern girl might be considered an agreeable

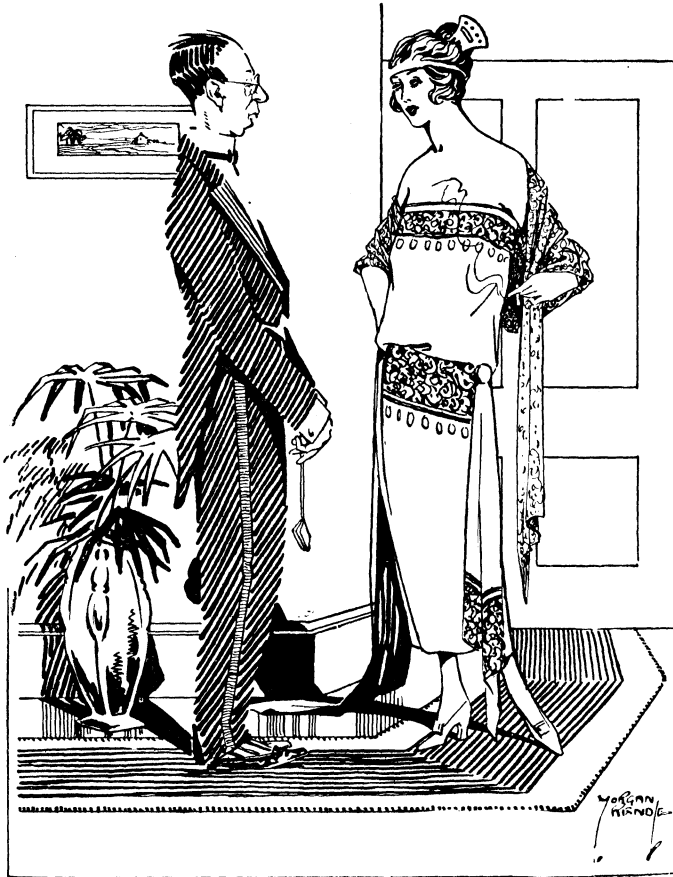
rattle, yet she used many expressions not to be found in his great work, the dictionary.

"Well, then, sir," he said, "if you observe me engaged in conversation with any of these young persons, you may know that I am collecting material for the next edition."

R. H. Roberts.



"WHAT is the oldest thing in the world?" asks a contemporary. We should not be at all surprised to learn that it is a joke about an egg.



PROGRESS.

HE: Since I met you I have only one thought.

SHE: Well, that's one more than you had when we met, old thing, isn't it?

A VOICE specialist attributes the scarcity of good tenors to the habit of smoking. This may be Nature's remedy to prevent the overcrowding of the concert platform.



A LADY recently sent in an Income Tax return to the inspector of nuisances, instead of to the inspector of taxes. There's many a true word written in error.



The Princess of Pless

—one of the most Beautiful of Women—and
Mercolized Wax for the Complexion

MERCOLIZED WAX absorbs the old dry and discoloured scarf skin, leaving exposed the fresh new complexion underneath. Use it for a few nights and see how your wrinkles and skin blemishes will disappear. The fame of this remarkable wax is world-wide. Can be obtained from all Chemists and high-class Stores.

The Princess of Pless' writes:

"DEAR SIRs,

It gives me very much pleasure in writing you in order that every woman may know the benefits to be derived from Mercolized Wax. So much depends on good looks that without a clear complexion and an unwrinkled face a woman does not get very far in this world. I can tell you here, Sirs, with full truth that people think I am younger than I am, and for this I have to thank your marvellous Mercolized Wax, which I have used since 1921, when I got back to my dear old England and those friends who were left. Anyone like me who has used cold creams and skin foods will see how vastly superior to them Mercolized Wax is for skin treatment.

My maid here stands next to me whilst I am writing this letter, and says that since I have used it I look years younger. I always use it after washing every morning and before going to bed at night, and my skin has become much smoother and whiter and my wrinkles have gradually disappeared.

I write this letter in order to help the poor ladies who really want to know how to treat their skins, and to keep young-looking for a very moderate outlay instead of indulging in expensive beauty and massage treatments. This wax they can use themselves, and in a very short time they will be surprised at the difference it will make in their complexion. It whitens sunburnt skin and for use on the hands it is most excellent.

Yours truly,

(Signed) MARIE THERESE, PRINCESS OF PLESS."

A DANGEROUS POST.

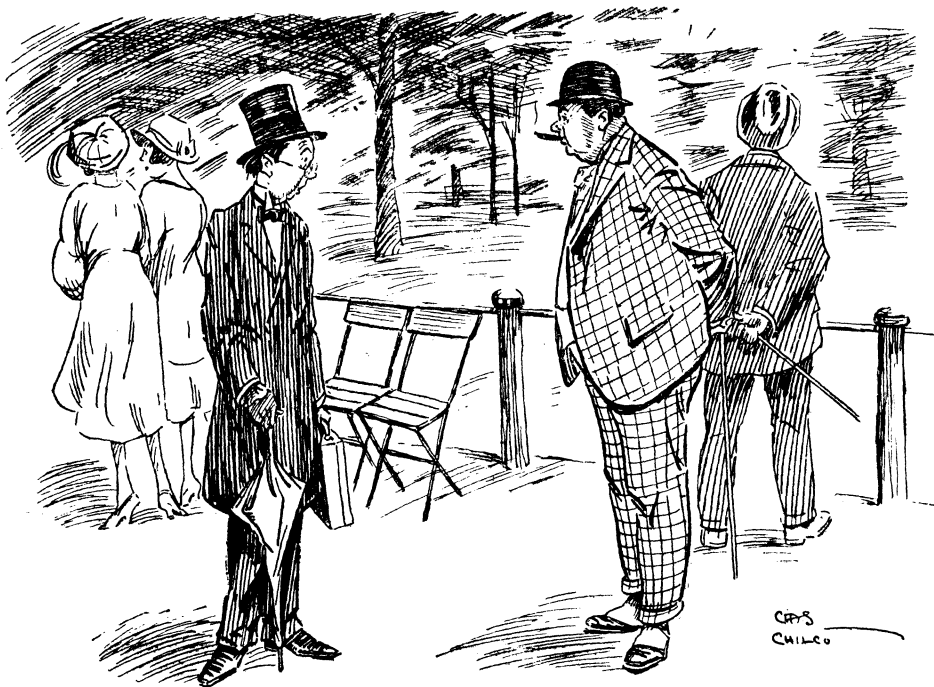
Only one post in the day.
 So many hours to wait,
 So many minutes to count!
 I'm always down at the gate
 To watch the old postman mount,
 Slow as a hearse, our hill.
 Only one post in the day.
 It never comes—but it will.

Only one post in the day.
 The postman stops in the street
 To chat to a passing friend.
 So many friends to greet;
 Will he never get to the end?
 Oh, postmen ought to be dumb
 With the only post of the day.
 It comes—will it ever come?

Only one post in the day.
 Dazed—am I white as a sheet?
 Or red as the postman's nose?
 For his glance is grave as I bleat
 "Morning—thanks." But he goes,
 And I totter alone to my room
 With the only post of the day.
 It has come, the letter of doom.

Only one post in the day.
 A lump swells up in my throat,
 My forehead in misery sweats,
 I fumble, I open, and note:
 "The Editor thanks—and regrets
 He cannot find use for the same."
 And that's the one post of the day!
 It shouldn't have come—but it came.

H. S. Vere Hodge.



THE ALIBI.

"I MET your wife yesterday."
 "Oh, what did she say?"
 "Nothing much."
 "Then it wasn't my wife."

Only one post in the day.
 And he checks at the Chatsworth door;
 I can count the letters from here,
 The greedy brutes have got four.
 Thank goodness, he's getting near,
 And soon I shall hear my fate
 From the only post of the day.
 It comes—but it's rather late.

Only one post in the day.
 There's a parcel for Mon Abri,
 Two letters for Capri (such waste—
 They are all away at the sea).
 Oh, why can't the fellow make haste?
 I shut my eyes. Has he passed
 With the only post of the day?
 It comes—it has come at last.

Facing Third Cover]

Does politeness pay? A reporter who attended a jumble sale recently and took his hat off, and afterwards found that it had been sold for twopence, thinks not.



"SHOULD Golfers Smoke?" asks a headline. Yes, certainly, if it is going to help take their minds off telling golf stories.



SMALL GIRL (watching mannequin parade):
 Mummie, how many of these manicures make a set?

THE WINDSOR

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"Euan stared at him. How did this fellow know?
What was he driving at?"

LEGEND ISLAND

By DOUGLAS NEWTON

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

WHEN Euan Vance quarrelled with his father, he just naturally went East. Naturally! It was in his blood, in his history—the little he knew of his history—it was even in his father's last taunt.

"Get out, then!" Furness Vance had snarled in his dry and brittle fury. "Go back to the wallow where you naturally belong. I could never hammer breeding into you—the beachcomber blood is too strong. Go back to the Islands from which you came, and be hanged to you!"

Euan knew that his father was telling him he was like his grandfather, his mother's father, John Carton. It had been his father's sneer again and again. There was disgrace in that, apparently, though Euan knew nothing about it. A low and unsavoury old man, John Carton, it seemed, who was not even to be thought of in the dry, thin, pallid presence of aristocratic Furness Vance.

All the same, Euan was pleased—pleased that he had a big, thick-set, deep-shouldered figure, and an open, squared-off, thrusting face like, it seemed, his grandfather's, utterly unlike the whippet lankness and the blanched, narrow-boned, and furtive

superiority of Furness Vance. For Euan Vance hated his father with a deep, consistent, and unalterable hatred.

His father had killed his mother. He had only been seven when she died, but he had known that. His father was a great gentleman. He moved loftily in the most exclusive circles. He was immensely rich, cultured, and had a beautiful home. He had exquisite, if frigid, manners, and one of the keenest brains of his time. But he was a fiend to those he ought to have loved.

His father had killed his mother: Euan never doubted that. With a thin and sneering cruelty implacable in its inhumanity, he had made his wife's life a living hell. He had tortured her, crushed her, shattered and disintegrated her gentle spirit day and night all the years Euan had known, and with never a legal or visible act of cruelty. She had died of a broken heart and soul, and Euan had understood and not forgotten.

She had never complained. The Carton strain might be "low" to Furness Vance, but it had fineness enough, courage enough, to keep a brave face and a high reserve in the face of the world. His

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mother had said nothing to Euan, but he had heard his father. His grandfather, old John Carton, was behind this hate, something that he had done, something that he was, kept alive his father's rage—that and the Islands, the memory of which were so dear to his mother that even now, when details were gone, Euan could recall the sensation of their loveliness which she had communicated to him. No, no details—just a curious glow of beauty came at the mere sound of the word, something that seemed to combine in one delicious sensation radiance and amazing colour, gentle warmth, soft music, and rich deep scents. He always obtained that reaction when somebody spoke of, or he himself thought of, the Islands. The Islands were the loveliest things on earth, he knew in his soul. So when his father kicked him out he went straight to them.

There were other reasons, naturally. He had to earn his living. He could not do that in his own country. His father had tried to hammer breeding into him—only that. That form of education was quite useless to help a man fight for his life in that jungle of civilisation called Commerce. To go overseas was the only thing a young man with an athletic body and a fair, if untrained, brain could do. And the Islands pulled, too, and there was a word a woman had dropped.

She was a woman who had come with her husband from the East. The weasel-faced husband had some peculiar business with Furness Vance. Euan, sixteen then, had stared at her all through dinner. Not because his youth was infatuated by her fine, slow, burning beauty, but because there was some mysterious, dark quality in her—a sort of tremendous, vital stillness, mystical, exotic, Eastern. She was English, but her eyes, like luminous jet, slanted just a trifle. Afterwards he recognised that there must have been something of Java and its mystery in her blood. She was more than twenty years his senior.

She had looked at him with the same curiosity and interest, as though she was recognising something veiled, yet familiar, in his features. And abruptly she said: "Do you know you have a face that means much in the Islands?"

He blushed all over, like the boy he was, choked, cried: "How do you mean? What do you mean?"

Her husband came in with a snap, asking her some trivial question about the voyage

home, his small, polished-stone eyes issuing warnings. The woman hooded the mystery of her glance, and began deliberately to talk of immaterial matters. Euan was shut out, and knew he was shut out. But something in him wouldn't let it rest there. He waited until he saw her husband and his father bound tight in conversation, and went straight up to her in the drawing-room.

"What do you mean by my face having a meaning in the Islands?" he demanded.

"You waited and took your chance, just as *he* would have done," she smiled at him.

"That," he said, "is no answer. It's also a riddle. Who is he? What bearing has it all on me?"

"You will find out, if you ever go to the Islands," she said.

"In the meantime," said the bitter voice of his father at his elbow, "you had better go to your own room, Euan."

Furness Vance would have no word about the Islands in his house. He loathed the mere thought of them like poison. Euan knew it; he knew it again as the woman Lele and her rat-faced husband came along his gallery to their room.

"I merely commented on the fact," Euan heard her slurred voice saying. "He is old John to the life."

"Don't I know?" snarled the husband. "That's the very reason your mention of it was a slap in the face to Vance."

"He didn't love old John?"

"Worse. He married old John's daughter for old John's money. Don't you know the story? Better know, to see how deeply you've put your fool foot in it. Well, this Vance may be very aristocratic, but he's a thorough brute, and was as poor as a rat—ought to be now, but for me and his wits. Old John's daughter was about the sweetest . . ."

Their door slammed on them; Euan heard no more. But five years after, when he stood up to his father, and his father turned him out into the world, he remembered what the woman had said, and went to the Islands, where his face had a meaning. When he knocked his father right across his own great lounge with a swinging punch for his constant brutality, past and present, to himself and particularly to his mother, he gladly turned his back on what was supposed to be his great inheritance and struck East.

* * * * *

After six months of the Islands he began to suspect that his own imagination, and the

woman, had lied. Nobody saw any meaning, save that he was a green young man without ability, in that significant face of his. He began at the beginning, and, with a few hundred pounds between him and the beach, expected the world to unfold in glory from the smelly city of Palembang. It refused so to unfold. Euan met quite a number of casual, pleasant men, and quite a number not so, who were pleased to drink his stingars. But all went off into a vacuum when the subject of employment was hinted at. There were a number of ex-temporary officers trying to talk with them on the same topic, and they had become wary. Apart from his first mild attack of malaria, and the trade-mark of a number of biting insects, Euan gained nothing there. With considerably less money, he crossed the Java Sea to Sarawak.

Kuching almost scuppered him, but he did get a sort of job at some oil wells along the coast. It was a detestable job, and not enduring. Word came from the Home Office that the retrenchment axe was to be applied, and Euan obviously had just the sort of neck that axe was built for.

With less money than ever, he began to drift. He went easterly and easterly, through the Moluccas and to New Guinea, through the Solomons to the Gilberts. He was gradually reaching the status of the beachcomber his father had spoken of, and nobody seemed to find anything to attract in his face. He was beginning to believe that he had made a mistake about that, and the woman, too, when, in Hawaii, it came to him as a certainty. In front of the Thistle Club a man stopped short and looked at him.

Euan recognised the rat-faced fellow. It was the husband of the woman Lele, older now and more important. He wondered whether the man would be friendly, suspected not, and guessed right. The man said with a dry bark: "I've heard what you've been doing. Take my advice—get out of here, get right out of the Pacific Ocean; you'll find it won't be sustaining."

It wasn't. Euan had come to take up a job in Pearl Harbour. He held it for three days. Then he was fired. No reasons were given, but he was fired. He got another in the town. He was also fired from that. When he went over to Hilo, and the same thing happened, he began to suspect there was more than the working of Providence in it, particularly as he had noted a furtive little Jap appearing always as a sort of

forerunner of dismissal at the place in which he was working.

Pennington—that was the rat-faced man's name—practically admitted this when Euan hunted out his office. "I told you it would be unhealthy for you here," he snarled. "I suspected this would happen."

"More than that," said Euan; "you made it happen. That Jap is yours. What do you say for yourself before I beat you up, Pennington?"

Pennington did an extraordinary thing. From a drawer he pulled a great wad of dollar bills. He scattered them about like a madman. He pulled out the drawer so that it fell on the floor, its papers making an unholly mess.

"Wade in!" he cried. "Beat me up, you mean wastrel dog! Beat me up, you remittance man!"

Euan made a start forward, stopped. He suddenly realised the man wasn't as mad as he seemed. With all that money scattered about, his beating up would look like an assault *with robbery*.

"Sorry," he said quietly. "You don't trick me into five years' gaol. But, by Heaven, you've got it in for me pretty hot if you don't stick at getting rid of me that way! What's the idea behind it?"

"We've no use for you in this part of the world. Clear out of it. Understand?"

"We!" echoed Euan. "That seems to tell me you're merely being a good servant of my father. Is that all you've got against me?"

"That, and that your face is not one we take kindly to in these places," said Pennington.

That stuck. On the long sailing slant he took to Suva he had time to think it out. His face—that was the difficulty, then. The woman Lele said that his face was one that had meaning in the Islands; he had also heard her say that he was the living image of old John, that meant his grandfather, John Carton. He remembered how he had always felt there was something wrong about his grandfather. Was that it? Was his grandfather's name and face so abhorred in these Islands that men dreaded to have connection with it? Euan had the sudden empty, hopeless feeling that comes to men when they realise they have made a bad mistake. He'd thought of the significance of his face as something good, whereas it was something criminal.

He thought more of this when a short, muscular native, who had Dyak written all

over him, stared at him on Suva waterfront, and then most unostentatiously began to follow him. The fellow looked like a brigand; he might also be an unauthorised police spy. Euan began to doubt the good to be had out of his connection with old John Carton. When a trader stared hard over the rim of his glass in a bar, and cried tersely, "Say, what's your name?" Euan decided that he had better have one of quite innocent description. "John Walworth" was the name he gave.

"H'm!" said the trader, a sparkling old fellow with white hair. "If you'd said Smith or Jones, I'd 'a' said outright you were lying." Euan knew that—that's why he had said "Walworth." "Anybody ever tell you you are the spit o' a feller called Carton?"

"One or two," said Euan, his heart fluttering and his face calm. "And who the deuce was he?"

"Used to be one of the biggest men in these parts. Started in with a single schooner and finished with his own fleet. Traded all over the Islands, specially on the belt between Australia and the Paumotus. Oh, he was a rich old ruffian, that's a fact! And you're the living spit of him. Not quite such a pirate, though."

"A tough nut?" said Euan, feeling that he was getting down to the worst.

"So. They said he did some pretty sharp things, specially where the French were concerned.

Believe there was something about that in the row he had with his son-in-law."

"Oh!" said Euan, with a dry mouth. "He had a son-in-law."

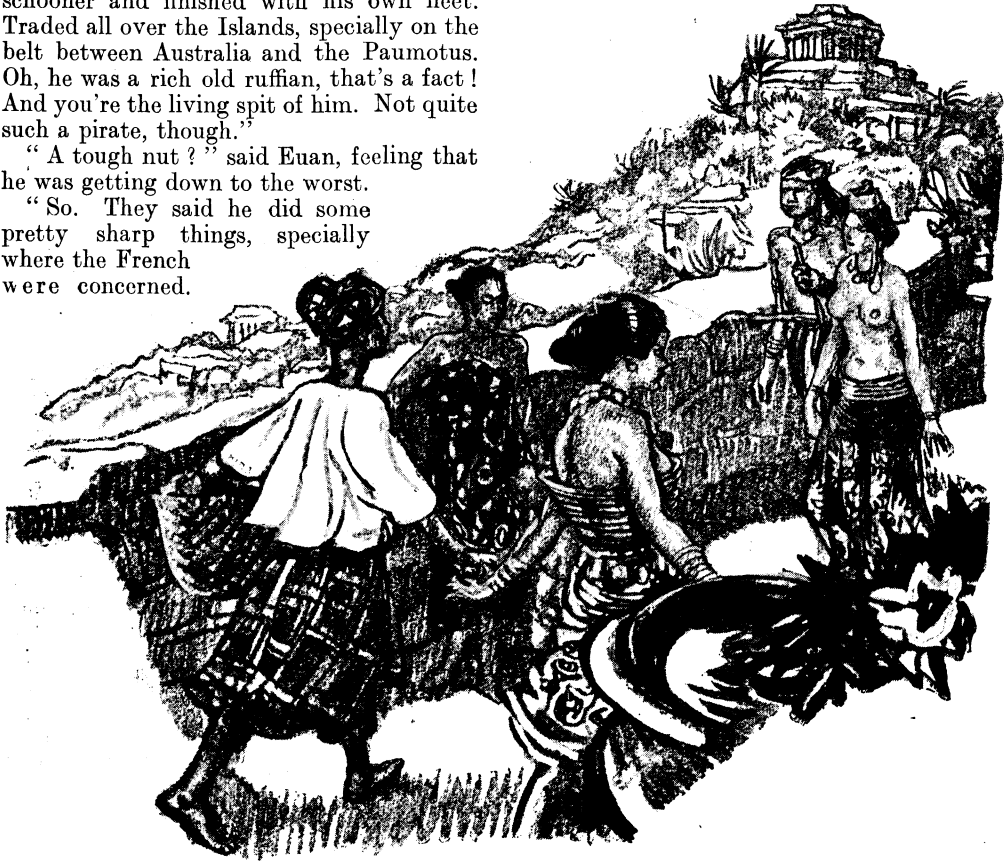
"Husband of his only girl. Bit of a snake that feller, named Vince, or Vance, or Vane, or something. Don't remember details, but there was a real row. An' this Vane or Vince took the girl away home."

"What became of John Carton?"

"Don't seem to remember," said the old man. "Sorter just dropped out, I fancy. Don't seem to remember how he ended, or died—if he died. He may have drifted off to Singapore, or home, or to the Lost Islands."

"Where the deuce are they?"

"'Longside the castles in Spain, I reckon," grinned the trader. "Just a saying here, you know, to account for the disappearance of a man whose going you can't account for. It means—well, you don't know where he's gone. It's a local joke."



"On the terraces of the palaces fairies indeed seemed to move; small, delicate woman shapes in shining clothes."



"'Yes, this is the Lost Island,' said his grandfather, 'the mythical place to which all the great old traders of the Islands retire.'"

"There aren't any Lost Islands, you mean?"

"Only in a story. There's a sort of legend that there are some wonderful islands somewhere, full of lovely marble palaces an' beauty. There's a tale that the old Dutch traders know the secret, an' sneak off there in the last years of their lives, to live in luxury an' ease, you see. It's a sort of pretty legend like that of the Fortunate Isles."

Euan forgot all about the legend because, when he got outside the bar, there was the Dyak waiting for him. This fellow followed him to his hotel, and Euan sat up half the night wondering whether this was more of Pennington's dirty work, and, if so, what he would do about it.

In the morning the Dyak again showed, but with him was a Chinaman, and they both stared at him as he ate his breakfast on the verandah, although both went away presently. All the same, Euan knew they had been at work when a Chinaman said to him outside a store, "Come!" and led him into the place.

Euan was so angry that he forgot he might be killed. He was led right through the shop to a little room all lacquer and gold and bronze. A very big Chinaman of enormous calm placidity sat in this room. He looked one long look at Euan and said in perfect American: "How d'ye do, my Lord Carton?"

"My name's Walworth," snapped Euan. "And I'd like to know the idea behind this."

The big Chinaman smiled Confucianly, clapped his hands softly, and tea was brought in handless cups.

"It would be Vance, I think, your name—Euan Vance, son of Furness Vance."

"Are you in league with Pennington?" snapped Euan.

"That would disgrace my fathers back to my ultimate ancestor," he said. "You may know what that means to a Chinaman even if he graduated at Harvard."

Euan could not help smiling. He sat down on the cushioned floor, took a cup of tea, said: "Then what is your meaning? If you are not with Pennington, what?"

"You are truly like your excellent grandfather," said the Chinaman, "not merely in the face, but in your manner."

"Is that a good or a bad thing for me?" asked Euan.

"And your honourable father? I knew him a little. You are singularly not like

him. And how are his to be venerated bones?"

"I have not known for the last eighteen months," said Euan curtly.

"Or cared?" said the Chinaman softly.

"I do not discuss my father with strangers," said Euan shortly.

"Excellent," said the Chinaman, with his suave smile. "And so you are looking for a trading venture?"

Euan stared at him. How did this fellow know? What was he driving at? "I am looking for work," he said curtly.

"I know of an excellent vanilla bean plantation that is going cheap," said the Chinaman. "A sure fine proposition, Mr. Vance. I believe, if you would look into it—"

"I won't," said Euan. "I am looking for work—estate manager, overseer, anything you like."

"For five hundred pounds English I can get you half share in this beautiful vanilla plantation."

"I haven't five hundred sous French," said Euan tersely.

"But your Excellency misunderstands," smiled the Chinaman. "I mean not cash on the nail—promise of cash to come in the course of a mail or two would be all I ask."

Euan understood. He had heard a great deal about Chinese moneylenders. "You are pulling the trigger of an empty pistol, Shang-Hai."

"King-Hang," smiled the Chinaman.

"An empty pistol, King-Hang. I have no money; I expect no money from any man. There are no money-bags to squeeze in my case. Good day."

He walked out of the shop indignant and sure of the tendency of events. Nevertheless, he was considerably mystified when a man came into his hotel that afternoon and offered him overseeing work on a small tea plantation. He said he'd heard Euan was looking for a job.

"Whom from?" asked Euan. "I don't know a soul in Suva, except a rascal Chink called King-Hang."

"Then you'll have to put it down to the rascal Chink," grinned Marrel, the man who was hiring him. "Probably you'll get to learn in time that rascal Chinks are rather like that."

Euan worked for three or four months on Marrel's plantation. If there wasn't any money in it, it was pleasant, and both Marrel and the work were easy. One day Marrel, who had never spoken of King-

Hang, asked Euan to go down to Suva to carry an order that was enclosed in a letter he handed over. The letter was to King-Hang.

"Who and what is King-Hang?" asked Euan, as he was preparing to go. "He seems an interesting sort of Chink."

"He is, but I wouldn't think of him as a 'Chink,'" said Marrel, "He's a coral-button mandarin, and about a ten times millionnaire, in addition to being high serene pinnacle of learning among the doctors of Pekin, honours man in Classics, History, and Humanity of Harvard, and the most powerful as well as the best influence, public and backstair, British, American, European, or Asiatic, in the Pacific. He's a great man, King-Hang, and knows more about earth and heaven and the Islands than any fifty men put together—and every decent man is glad to have his regard. Treat him as the gentleman he is—he deserves it."

Euan Vance rode his two-day journey into Suva, and on the morning of the first day a strange thing happened. As he put on his coat, Marrel's letter fell from his pocket, and as he picked up the envelope from the ground, the letter fell out. Either Marrel hadn't licked the gum properly, or tropic dew had robbed that gum of all gumminess. Anyhow, the letter fell out, and, as he picked it up, Euan could not help noticing a queer feature about it. His eyes told him that if ever there was a virgin sheet of note-paper, this was it. On unfolding the paper, this was confirmed. There was not a line on it. The important order he was to take to King-Hang was a blank. He tested it out for secret writing by all methods he knew, but there was nothing on it.

He went down to King-Hang rather thoughtful, wondering whether he *ought* to treat him like a gentleman. King-Hang solved that problem by treating him as one. He said nothing about the letter, but talked about Shakespeare's comedies and tea-growing. Presently he said: "Mr. Marrel writes me that he thinks you ought to be doing better work than on his estate." Which was rather an astonishing thing for any estate manager to say, especially in a letter in which there was not a single written word. But Euan said nothing of this; he was just wondering what it was leading to. "There is a lady here," went on King-Hang, "who is looking for a manager. I will give you a letter to her, if you would be so amiable as to see her."

Euan went to see Miss Isabel Rowan, and

realised that either King-Hang or the world was madder than he imagined. Isabel Rowan was the last thing one would connect with a tea plantation on the administration side. He saw a slim slip of a girl, delicate, fairylike, with all her own colour glowing about her. She was there with a Chinese and a Javanese servant and an *amah*, the most beautiful girl he'd ever seen, and apparently she had stepped sheer out of nowhere. In the Islands most people are known to each other, particularly the women, particularly, one would say, must a girl of this exquisite kind be known. But no man knew her, apparently, though Euan could see in a score of eyes that was not from lack of desire.

She'd been American and Paris educated, she was full of vividness and laughter. He had never met anything so buoyant and adorable. She dismissed the tea plantation almost at once. She said she'd had word from King-Hang that he was all she desired; she just wanted to find out if they could get on together. She gave him an hour, and she gave him tiffin, and by the end of that time they might have known each other for all their years.

Or, to be precise, she might have known him, for he learnt nothing about her save that she was adorable. She had dismissed herself and her estate by saying that it was in an island "over there," waving her hand vaguely towards the Carolines, and after that the main item of their talk seemed to be Euan Vance and his history.

Quite easily he found himself telling her everything, even about his father's brutality to himself and his mother, and his own leaving home; how he had come to the Islands because his mother loved them—her wonderful eyes softened as he told that—how, too, he had thought that his apparent likeness to old John Carton might help him on the road to a fortune. He even told her how he was beginning to feel that that likeness was a hindrance, and why.

It was easy to tell her everything, she was so interested, so eager, so beautiful, so sympathetic. He didn't regret a single word of his confession. The only thing he thought about was that she was lovely in a queer, fairylike, sophisticated and yet strangely innocent way. He also remembered that he was under contract to join her next morning on a small auxiliary motor schooner, and that King-Hang, in a powerful but mysterious manner, had arranged for his going with Marrel.

He spent a delicious few days in the schooner. No seaman, he had only the vaguest feeling that they pushed up by the Lagunes and the fringe of the Carolines through a sea gilded with the sun. He also noted that the schooner was as delicately found as a yacht, that her auxiliary was extraordinarily powerful, and that the crew, instead of being Kanakas, were of a curious, silent race, powerfully built and graceful, with a look, maybe, of the sea Dyak, though there was a deeper touch of China in them.

But these things mattered little. Isabel Rowan mattered so much. A mystery seemed to settle more and more on her fragile beauty the longer he knew her. There was almost something other-worldly about her. She knew America and Paris, where she had been to school, but she seemed to know the Islands not at all. She knew, for instance, a great deal about their history, could talk of the great figures, the daring, semi-piratical trading skippers who had built up the trade, but she did not know any of the modern figures, the modern conditions. Euan spoke name after name of well-known personalities to her, and she had never even heard of them. Her isolation from her fellows seemed to be almost uncanny. "I think you are a sea-lady visiting mortals for a spell," he laughed at her. "You seem to have spent your time in fairyland, and to have passed human things by."

"Perhaps I have," she smiled. "I so often feel like that."

She wouldn't explain why she felt like that, or describe her fairyland, though they were soon on the most intimate footing. Even when her island came in sight she was queerly reticent.

Euan was astonished by that island. It was not merely that it was lonely—it was impossible. It was no more than the stark top of some great mountain sticking out of the polished, sunny floor of the sea. As they drew near, the sheer lift of the igneous rock appalled Euan. There was no possible landing-place in those stark cliffs.

"You're never going to get on to that—you can't!" he cried to her. And then he noticed that the motor was working full time, and saw that the reason was a most deadly rip current that had to be fought. "That is, you won't get on to it unless as a wreck."

"You'll see," she smiled, and would say no more.

Next morning Euan saw. He woke to the

realisation that the schooner was at anchor in a placid sea. He looked from his port-hole on to an amazing sight. He looked, not upon a sheer, grim wall of cliff, but upon terrace upon terrace of smiling gardens, gardens that shone with flowers and tender green until they looked like terraces in fairyland. And amid this shining jewellery of flowers and leaves he saw houses gleaming like jewels—amazing houses of carved and radiant stone, exquisite houses, delicately wrought in stone carved to lace. He felt as though he was looking upon some fantastic scene from some dainty Eastern fairy tale. He gazed at the heights and saw the grim line of igneous rock marking the melting sky. He gazed at the wine-dark water and understood. He was not outside the island. He was inside it. The island was no more than a gigantic extinct volcano, with the sea forming a great lagoon in the crater. And the schooner was on that lagoon; it had got through the apparently impenetrable cliffs into the cup of the interior.

He went on deck, gazed bewildered at the strange, exotic loveliness of this kingdom in the cup of a mountain. He almost expected it to melt before his eyes. It did not. Instead Isabel came to him smiling, Isabel more fairy-like and ravishing than ever in the delicate sampot of Cambodia and the bravely shining coat-shawl of that old kingdom. She smiled, cried: "Say nothing—only come!"

A sampan shining with tridacna and tortoiseshell inlay slid them across the polished water of the lagoon to a great landing-stage, a wonderful quay of basalt stone fitted together without mortar, such a work of an unrecorded race as one will find all over the Islands from Easter Island to Java, only there was superimposed upon it the delicately-wrought fret-carving of Cambodia.

From this quay they climbed by nobly-carved stairs, by coral-white paths set under noble yasi—the sandal-wood trees now almost extinct in the Islands—by gardens smooth and shining with flowers, by houses that gleamed white and lovely like the palaces of Oriental fairies. In the gardens, on the terraces of the palaces, fairies indeed seemed to move; small, delicate woman shapes in shining clothes; creatures of filigree in sampot and jewelled coat, and jewelled pagoda head-dresses that might have come from old Cambodia; women mysterious and subtle and fine from

old Siam; Greek-bodied Kenyah women with almond eyes of mystery, sarong clad, and proclaiming in their free beauty the sea Dyak blood in them; delicate porcelain women from Malay, heroic and gentle goddesses in the bright pareus of the Marquesas and the Polynesian Isles; dark women, women of cinnamon, of old ivory, of bronze, in garments that glittered and flashed amid the flowers, the stirring leaves and the fretted palaces—beautiful women, all looking softly, laughing softly, moving delicately and mysteriously in a delicate and mysterious world.

And men moved, too—indolent, free men in bright clothes moved languorously at gentle work, or sat in groves and played softly on nose-flute, stringed fiddles and drums. All, men and women, smiled at Isabel as she went past and in tinkling voices answered her greeting.

There were white men, too, old, white men. On an exquisite terrace, that looked like a glimpse of Versailles seen by a Khmer craftsman, on which wonderful carvings of Naga, the sacred and seven-headed cobra, and other animal pieces that vied with the artistry of Ankor Thom were ranged by marbles and bronzes that could only have come from Ancient Rome and Greece—on this terrace a very old and lean man in perfect tropic drill rose and bowed stiffly as only a courtly Frenchman can. From another terrace shining with bulbs an enormous old Dutchman waved and called a guttural greeting. They met a wrinkled Chinaman on the arm of a Javanese, who spoke softly and with smiles. Two other Dutchmen and an Englishman also greeted them. Old men all of them, some immensely old, but all bearing a certain stamp of power as well as a gracious air of gentleness and serenity. Euan remembered that man who had talked of the place to which old Dutchmen retired, and began to wonder.

They came to the finest palace of all, long, cool, shining white stone and glittering red, gold and black lacquer. In a great room, simple and yet superb with the art of the Mings, an old man rose and came towards them—a remarkable old man, thick-set, with a candid, thrusting face.

Euan stared at the face.

"John Carton!" he gasped.

The old man smiled. "Welcome, grandson!" he said. "Welcome to the Lost Islands!"

"I brought him, guardian!" cried

Isabel. "I did not even have to hesitate about him. He is old John Carton—young again."

They stood leaning on a balustrade of green-and-gilt lacquer, looking down over the shining terraces to the wine-dark lagoon that filled the bottom of the extinct crater.

"Yes, this is the Lost Island," said his grandfather, "the mythical place to which all the great old traders of the Islands retire. It's a legend outside, but you are looking on fact, Euan. You won't wake up out of a dream."

Euan looked at the glorious view, looked at Isabel, soft, glowing, gentle, beside him. He was glad he had not to wake.

"This was the hiding and resting-place of the Khmer kings," said old John Carton. "Khmer, you know, is the old name of the Cambodian Empire that has now gone to pot. One of the admirals of Jayavarman VII., the greatest king of Khmer, discovered the secret of this place—a deep-water channel that will take a large schooner, that we screen rather neatly with a movable curtain of false rock. Jayavarman and some of the most trusted of his court built most of the places here, brought their families here, used it as a holiday place, made it the place of beauty it is."

"But kept the secret," said Isabel.

"Aye, kept it so well that it is only known as a legend, as a dream of perfect beauty, to most citizens of the world. When Khmer began to go down before the Mongols and the Annamese, one of the kings sold the secret to a Portuguese seaman in return for the service of his guns, ships, and men. The Portuguese became a grantee in the Islands, and passed the secret to a few trusted boon companions, and so it got down to the Dutch and a few others, including King-Hang and—me. We lived all our lives waiting for the day when we could come and end our days here in beauty and in ease. I came here when your father made things too hot for me in the Islands."

"What did my father do to you, sir?" asked Euan angrily. Already he was loving this fine old man, this generous old man so startlingly kin to him in manner and mind.

"It doesn't matter," said old John Carton. "Here we leave behind us rancour and bitterness."

"I hate my father," said Euan in a low voice.

"Your mother loved him, boy," said the old man.

"And he killed her," said Euan. He had already told the old man his story.

"Yes," said the old man, "he is of a cruel and hateful type. But I am seventy-three, my boy, and there is so little time left for me that I cannot waste it hating. Your father is greedy for money, that is all, Euan. He was sent out to the Islands because—because his greed had made him indiscreet at home. He was your true remittance man, but he had a most polished manner. He married your mother because her father was a millionaire, but she loved him. He was disappointed over the marriage settlements, and began to hate me for that. I wanted him to work, make good, you see. I gave him more and more money for her sake—made him a millionaire. But that wasn't enough for him. I had more millions which he felt ought to come to him. He, and that jackal of his, Pennington, found out something. It was highly illegal, but we were sometimes that way inclined in those old days, and if it had been taken into the courts, the French would have sent me to Noumea for the rest of my days. He tried to blackmail me. When I was firm, he compounded with the French to take three-quarters of my fortune by way of a reward. Then I knew that the time had arrived for me to come here, and I came."

Later Isabel walked with Euan through those wonderful gardens that made that hidden fairyland. "It is wonderful," she said to him softly. "We are here, hidden, hanging half-way between the earth and heaven, as it were, and yet we are not out of touch with the world. King-Hang sees to that. He is our agent between us and the world; he keeps us in touch. Do you know, we get, through him, all the world's books and many of the world's papers, though we don't read much of those—the events of the world seem so trivial to these old men dying so simply and beautifully. We get much of the latest music, too, and pictures. We are quite modern, we dwellers in fairyland."

"And how do you get out to be educated and so forth?" asked Euan.

"Only I have done that," she smiled. "Outside the natives I am the only person under twenty-five in this island. I am an unhappy—or I should say a happy accident. Your grandfather brought me here. My mother was the widow of his trusted partner, and he brought us along, when I was a baby, because he could not leave us to fend in the world alone. Since there are no high schools for young girls among us, I

was sent to America and France, by means of King-Hang, of course."

"King-Hang is the good angel of these parts—mine, too, I take it?"

"Yes, one of King-Hang's men recognised you as a man with old John's face. King-Hang saw you, and sent word to old John, having first found out you had quarrelled with your father, and were cut off without a shilling."

"I see that now; he tricked me beautifully," said Euan.

"The man who holds the secret of this island can trick anybody," she smiled. "He sent word to us, taking care that you should keep near Suva until he heard. I was sent along—to allure you." She smiled at him radiantly.

"They chose their siren well," said Euan softly, so softly that she blushed.

"No, not that really," she protested. "I was to find out things—whether this break with your father was a real one. Your grandfather felt that he could not bear to see your father's son, but your mother's—"

"I was never anything else," he said; "I am my grandfather's blood. And to think I was once uneasy about being it!"

"I saw what you were," she said, "so I brought you here—to this fairyland of old men."

"A fairyland of old men," he said. "Yes, that's what it is. But you—you're young. Don't you ever want to go out through there?" He pointed to the great arching gash in the cliff against the lagoon. "Back to the world?"

"Yes," she said. "All this is beautiful, but I'm young."

They stared at the big gash in the cliff, the gate to the vigorous world.

"Why not?" he said softly.

She looked up at him quickly, a fluttering, breathless glance—a glance that told him she was a girl, a woman, that told him that it must be by another gate that a woman gained the world. Their glances caught, tangled, held. Then she led him on gently to look at this fairyland of old men, and they were silent as they went, deliciously silent.

After a week of it, its deliciousness, old John spoke to him on that lacquer verandah that looked down upon the shining terraces.

"It's beautiful, but you fret, Euan," he said in his kind old way. "Its rest and beauty are not enough for you."

"I'm young," said Euan. "I was glad to come. It was worth seeing. It has been

more than worth while meeting and knowing you, sir. But—I'm young."

"I know," said old John. "It's my blood in you that makes you want to go out and work hard, encounter things. I'm glad it takes you thus; I wouldn't have it otherwise, glad though I am to have seen you, boy."

"There's another thing, sir," said Euan, growing red.

"Yes," said the old man softly. "She's young, too—her place is not here."

Euan stared at him, stammered: "You—you understand, sir, about Isabel?"

"More than that," smiled the old man. "I brought you for Isabel." He raised his hand a little to prevent Euan from speaking. "She's very dear to me, but she's young in this kingdom of old men. There is no man here for her. I do not now know the world and the men who might be for her. I remembered your mother, and was afraid. I dreamed of my girl's son being the man for her, but I was afraid. He might be my girl's husband's son. I thought that you might grow up like Furness Vance, and that it was best to leave you alone. Then King-Hang sent word, and my hopes rose. You

were my daughter's son, my own blood, fit to mate with this girl who was dear to me as a granddaughter. Can you see the workings of an old man's heart, boy? He could have the joy of seeing you, he could have the joy of mating his little girl to one he was sure of. So, on King-Hang's word, I sent her to fetch you, and I am glad."

Euan started up. "Grandfather," he cried, "I'm lucky in my blood! And, by Heaven, I'll work for Isabel!"

"You will, I know," smiled his grandfather. "And King-Hang will see to it you get your chance. And I am content."

"Granddad," cried Euan, "how can I thank you?"

"No need—you are my grandson. And Isabel, she's out there on the terrace. Go and tell her that the schooner goes back to Suva to-morrow, and that there are cabins ready for both of you aboard. The one thing we lack here is a registrar of marriages, but King-Hang will see to it. Go, Euan, I am content."

And Euan went out to the terraces where Isabel stood, fairylike, in the silver moonlight, looking down upon the fairy terraces of that fairyland of old men.



ENCHANTMENT.

HAVE you seen my lady Maeve
 Moving o'er the summer grass?
 In her blood is hid a wave,
 And her beauty doth surpass
 That of any other lass.
 It was Mother Eve who stole
 The wave and hid it, now, alas!
 There's no herb can make me whole;
 I shall carry to the grave,
 As if mirrored in a glass,
 All the beauty that she gave
 On the day I saw her pass.
 When she raised her lids, alas!
 She drew forth my very soul:
 I must follow o'er the grass
 Till I die or find the goal.

BARBARA DRUMMOND.

MATCH PLAY IN GOLF

By BERT SEYMOUR

Winner of "The News of the World" Tournament, 1921, the Croydon and District Professional Alliance Cup, 1920, and the Essex Championship Cup, 1922

(In a chat with Clyde Foster)

Illustrated from action-photographs for which Bert Seymour himself has posed.

MATCH playing at golf appeals to me. I like to have my opponent at close quarters, with my eye on his doings and his eye on mine. All the way round we both know how matters stand, as men contend at billiards or in the ring. I suppose golf was first played in this way.

Medal play or stroke play is not like this. The golfer is then harassed—anyhow, I am—to know how the rest of the competitors are performing. He might have played this or that hole better had he known exactly what was required of him. Ignorance on this point takes some of the snap out of his game.

Not all golfers may feel like this, but many do. The greatest match player in the world to-day is Abe Mitchell—perhaps he is even the best golfer—yet Mitchell has seldom done justice to himself in events decided by the aggregate of strokes.

It may be that the counting of his score introduces an element of nervousness. Put him up against the winner of an open championship for a match the day after, and he would be favourite.

Everybody remembers how Jock Hutchison disposed of Mr. Roger Wethered in their

play off for the Open Championship at St. Andrews. That was practically match play, inasmuch as the men had only themselves to watch, and each could tell how the result was shaping. There were no dark horses in the field to spring surprises.

I remember that when I won *The News of the World* knock-out tournament two years ago, J. A. Taylor congratulated me and said: "The man who can win this event can win the Open Championship." I shook my head and said to myself that I wished I could believe him. Yet it is true that most, if not all, the open champions of recent years—excluding the Americans, of course—have won *The News of the World* competition once or twice.

Several winners of the great "knock-out" tournament are still, however, waiting to prove the truth of Taylor's remark in their own cases.

I should like to give briefly my account of the forty-holes *News of the World* final fought out by J. N. Gaudin and myself at Oxhey in 1921. Gaudin was one up for the first time at the 34th hole. I had been two up several times, and when the marker said to me, "When are you going to start to beat your man?" I replied, "When he lets me."



MY GRIP.

It was a very hot autumn day, and I thought Gaudin showed signs of tiring when he stood one up and two to go for the 36-holes match. Little did either of us then imagine we should take each other to the fortieth.

The 35th being halved in four, Gaudin was then dormy one on me. He hit a long shot off the 18th tee, and by a supreme effort I just managed to make him play the odd. Gaudin had a putt of seven or eight feet to halve the hole and win.

For the only time in my experience I went up and examined the line of my opponent's putt, concluding that he might miss it, as he did. We were then all square. He came up to shake hands with me, thinking we had to share the honours of the day. "No, Jack," I said, "we have to go on till someone wins." That illustrates the mental strain.

The 37th was halved in four, both missing

for a three. We were both getting the jumps. The bit was in my mouth.

At the 40th, the honour being mine, I drove a long ball down the middle. Gaudin's approach shot landed in a deep bunker in



STANCE FOR DRIVING, SEEN FROM TWO POINTS OF VIEW.

front of the green. I laid mine with the mashie eight or ten yards from the pin. "Now or never!" I reflected. But Gaudin rose to the occasion, and by a hard explosive shot in the bunker laid his ball on the green, six yards from the hole.

I was now playing the like at a distance of eight yards, and passed the hole by four or five feet. Gaudin, playing the odd, very nearly holed. Here was my chance. If ever I set my face and steadied my wits for a putt, it was on this occasion. I had been putting one stance all through the match, and now decided to alter it at this crucial moment.

Bringing my left foot forward and my right foot behind the ball, I struck firmly, and to my intense relief—and almost to Gaudin's relief as well—the ball disappeared in the tin. I tell you, we showed signs of fatigue after that battle.

The greatest example of match playing

putts for a three. I let him off at the 36th by failing to hole a three-foot putt for a four. Gaudin took five. I halved, instead of winning, the 39th by missing a yard putt



TOP OF SWING.

seized with neuralgia, and our combination went to pieces. The opponents won the next four holes and beat us, afterwards winning the Tournament.

I can see Vardon now, studying his last decisive putt of three feet for the match. He walked up and down several times, scrutinising the line to the hole. Then he putted, stooping very low. The ball hung



concentration I can think of was a two-ball foursome I played with Roland Jones as my partner against Harry Vardon and Tom Williamson at Deal in one of the professional tournaments, before the War, at the beginning of my career.

We had won the previous round against two Scottish professionals by eight and seven. Vardon seemed to take Jones and me very seriously, as he had good reason to do.

At the second hole I had my first baptism of applause from the gallery, on holing a putt of fifteen yards. At the turn we were out in 32 against 36 and stood three holes up. Vardon scarcely opened his lips. He certainly did not speak a word to me. At the fourteenth hole we still held our advantage, and the reporters, thinking it was all over, left us to finish. But a match is never won till it is lost.

Vardon and Williamson took every chance we gave them. Jones was suddenly



FINISH OF SWING.



STANCE FOR THE MID-IRON.



BACK SWING WITH MID-IRON.

an instant on the lip of the hole. If we had all been photographed then, our attitudes would have made a picture of tense hopes and fears. Then the ball fell in, and Vardon smiled, for the first time in the match.

I do not mean that he was a grim opponent, but only that he never for a moment relaxed his attention on the game, by word or gesture. Many a time since, the great golfer's quiet determination in that foursome has come back to me as a lesson in concentration.

That match also taught me never to neglect chances or be lenient to opponents when they crack up. The time for com-



FINISH OF STROKE WITH MID-IRON.

passion is on the way back to the clubhouse, with victory in your pocket. To keep on saying "Hard luck!" or "Sorry!" during a match is mockery. At heart, we are glad to see misfortune overtake the enemy. That is human nature, and there is nothing the matter with it. The play is the thing.

You sometimes hear it said that long tee shots do not count for much, but I think people who speak like this are generally short drivers, who secretly wish they could add another fifteen or twenty yards to their drives. One great advantage in long driving is that you may keep an opponent playing



STANCE FOR MASHIE.

the odd for his second. That tells in the end.

I had the satisfaction once of seeing an



BACK SWING WITH MASHIE.

official of Walton Heath measure a drive of mine, and of hearing him say that it was the longest shot he had seen at that hole. On another occasion, in a *News of the World* round against Mitchell—my ideal golfer—I outdrove one of his long shots by twenty yards. An old gentleman pointed to Mitchell's ball and said: "This is yours, Seymour." When Mitchell claimed the shorter one as his, the old gentleman exclaimed, "I couldn't have believed it possible for anybody to drive farther than Mitchell!" and then followed us round to see the same thing happen several times.



FINISH OF FULL MASHIE SHOT.

I was all out that day, and it was Mitchell's deadly pitch shots to the pin that enabled him to beat me 2 and 1. I never strained on the tees so much again. It is better to go reasonably easy. Mitchell does not pull a face when driving his longest. But the club-head goes through so fast that the eye of the camera could hardly catch it. He has the finest pair of golfing wrists I ever saw. Mine are not exactly small, but they look small by comparison with Abe's.

In this match I tried to discover some weakness in Mitchell's play, but for the first nine holes I could find none. He must

have a weakness somewhere, I thought, as no man is a perfect machine. At last I saw him hesitate at a long hole and put back his driver for the spoon, apparently to avoid driving into a distant bunker. He half-played the shot, finding trouble nearer at hand. That hole fell to me. In vain I hoped to get him guessing again. He had learned his lesson, and my work was cut out to keep level with him from that point off the tees. Besides, I knew that he played a trifle within himself, whereas I was letting it all go.

I think you see better golf in a knock-out competition than in a stroke competition, because in the latter I often find that I cannot go for a shot that I would go for, and most likely get, in match play.

The great thing is to make an opponent feel that he cannot afford to make any mistakes and must play his best golf. Playing George Duncan, for example, I



FINISH OF MASHIE-NIBLICK SHOT.



TOP OF MASHIE-NIBLICK SHOT.

should know that I must fight him from start to finish, in case one of his miraculous moods should come over him; for no golfer to-day can spring surprises like the wizard of Hanger Hill. Some of his shots, especially iron shots to the greens, are enough to make an opponent lose his head.

Sometimes it takes courage to play short in match play, as, for instance, in playing the odd from a difficult position for the shot to the green. My first thought would then be that a stroke might be sacrificed to my advantage, by merely playing out for safety. "Safety first" is a good rule in such cases.

The opponent might say to himself: "I have got him!" In this over-confident mood he will often fluff his shot, or otherwise make a mess of it.

It isn't given to many of us to bang a ball out of a gorse bush, perhaps dislodging the bush, as Ted Ray can do with his mashie-niblick and those mighty shoulders of his. I saw Ted do this very thing on the Eden course at St. Andrews. It made the spectators roar with laughter. No man combines accuracy with power like Ray.

I suppose I am one of the few professional golfers who did not start as a caddie. I was

page-boy at Home Park Golf Club, Surbiton, Surrey, from the age of fourteen to twenty-one, practising golf on every possible occasion in summer evenings and mornings.

I would spend hours at a time learning to play shots from the rough. That may account in great part for the fact that to-day the mashie-niblick is the club that wins me my matches. I never feel any uncertainty about making good shots with that club. It is the most effective weapon in my armoury.

The pictures with which this article is interspersed will illustrate my styles with the clubs on which I most rely. I seldom carry a cleek and rarely use the spoon.

My theory of hitting a long ball is to feel that I am on a swivel, which enables me to bring the right shoulder through almost under the chin. I hold all clubs lightly till I come on the ball, when the grip tightens mechanically.

At the top of the swing with the driver, a child could pull the club out of my slackened hands. This is the greatest thing

in all golf. Tight gripping takes the necessary flick out of the shot, and the club is no longer left to do its work.

Perhaps I may conclude this article with a bit of humour. Once I had to give up a pupil as absolutely hopeless. It was at Molesley Hurst, where I was professional before coming to West Essex. In the end I told my assistant to warn me as the pupil approached the shop, so that I could disappear. I felt it was a shame to take the pupil's money.

One day he came to ask me to show him how to play out of a bunker. I did so and left him working on the sand. Half an hour afterwards he came to the shop to say that he had not got a single ball out.

On another occasion, when caddies were scarce, a boy was employed who had not carried clubs before. The caddie-master had apparently instructed him to pick up the divots. He was my opponent's caddie. We roared with laughter on discovering that the raw caddie was stuffing the sods into his pocket.



STANCE FOR MASHIE-NIBLICK IN BUNKER.



STANCE FOR PUTTING.



FOUR YEARS OLD

By WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

YET once again, through sense and sight,
As these so many thousand years,
Dawns Earth's unchangeable delight
To the new soul that sees and hears.



The flowers, the song of birds, the streams
That glitter in the sun, the fields—
What new dreams, like such old, old dreams,
Each light or music newly yields!



Ah, little Flower, who pluckest flowers
As through the summer hills we go,
Wilt thou pluck truths surpassing ours,
Or will Earth's secret still be so?



Now unto thee, as unto all,
There come the question and the quest;
Thou hearest the primeval call;
The old wonder whispers in thy breast.

ONCE A YEAR

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

THE Imperial Hotel, Shoremouth, looks very well on one's stationery when one writes to one's friends to say that the weather is fine and that one is getting sunburnt. In fact, the house has prospered exceedingly since it ceased calling itself the Imperial Boarding Establishment and advertised separate tables. It boasts of a "lounge," a real billiard table with a surface like that of an L.C.C. lawn tennis court, and two greasy waiters of doubtful nationality and less than doubtful cleanliness. In fact, despite the absence of a license, it has many points in common with a real hotel.

It is the visitors who let it down by lapsing into a sort of boarding-house intimacy with one another, despite the separate tables. The young men and maidens get through the initial stages to holding one another's hands by moonlight with a rapidity born of the knowledge that holidays come only once a year. Their mammams sit on the verandah and knit—which is the human way of chewing the cud—and discuss the social amenities of Tooting. In fact, everything goes on much the same as when the guests all sat round a long table, and Miss Stagg, rolling a reverent eye on the New Zealand mutton, expressed a forlorn hope that they would all be truly thankful.

To the Imperial Hotel, Shoremouth, towards the middle of August came Douglas Farrant, a nice, fresh-faced youngster of four-and-twenty, whose type may be seen pervading the District Railway twice daily at nine and six. He was employed in an office where they bought things from foreign countries and sold them at a profit in England, and bought other things in England which they sold at a profit in foreign countries. He was earning four pounds ten a week, could read and write in French and Spanish, and had "prospects." He owned a motor-bicycle, always watched Chelsea on Saturday afternoons during the football season, and was always Oxford at the Boat

Race. Now you know, or ought to know, exactly the sort of fellow he was.

Tea was always served in the lounge, and tea-time on the afternoon of his arrival was his first opportunity of seeing his fellow-guests assembled together. He had promised himself, ever since he had booked his room, that he would find attractive female society at the Imperial. At first glance he was a little disappointed. The four or five girls who first came under his notice did not greatly attract him. He knew all about beauty being but skin deep, and one kind heart being a more valuable asset than all the pretty faces in the world, but at twenty-four one expects jam with one's bread-and-butter.

Just as he was beginning to think that the Imperial only attracted the sort of spinster who had to butt through the world with only a kind heart and a loving disposition to recommend her, he saw Constance Brake sitting beside her mother at the far end of the room.

One might just as well call a sunset pretty as say that Constance was. Pretty is not at all the right word. She was radiant, a young creature with glowing cheeks, softly shining brown eyes, fluffy fair hair and teeth that sparkled when she smiled. Douglas stared at her for a long minute, stirring his tea all the while in his preoccupation, until somebody passed him the sugar.

Mother and daughter were both plainly but attractively dressed. Mother looked rather aristocratic. Daughter looked just an angel, and, according to popular tradition, there is no aristocracy among the angels. Mrs. Brake sat on a Chesterfield as if it were a throne, and, with her rather fine air, conversed with a small circle of people around her. It was easy to see that she was the reigning queen of the Imperial.

Pretending that he wanted to look at a paper lying on an unoccupied chair, Douglas crossed the room and sat near the Brakes. The paper turned out to be a treatise on crochet work made easy, but he pretended

to read it, all the same. Quietly, but in a voice pitched just high enough for him to hear, Mrs. Brake was discoursing on her home life at Sipton Homilly, and incidentally about Constance.

"No, Mrs. Muffard," he heard her say to the old lady sitting next to Constance, "she isn't properly out yet. She had to miss the last Drawing Room through having such a terrible earache. She will have to wait until next season to be presented. But I have promised to take her to the Hunt Ball in the New Year."

Mrs. Muffard beamed kindly upon the prospective debutante. "What a time you're going to have, my dear!" she exclaimed. "Dinners and dances, and going to Ranelagh to see the cricket matches, and the polo at Wimbledon. Oh, dear me, what a lucky girl!"

The lucky girl was looking a little less radiant, and made some brief inaudible reply.

"Oh, she has a very good time as it is," laughed her mother. "She hunts three days a week during the season. Little monkey! I have a job to keep her out of the saddle."

"There, now!" exclaimed Mrs. Muffard. "I suppose you keep fox-hounds, Mrs. Brake?"

Mrs. Brake hesitated.

"Only a few, perhaps?" suggested Mrs. Muffard helpfully.

"My husband used to run the pack when he was alive. I am quite incapable of taking it on. I don't think women masters answer at all. But, of course, we walk two or three couples out of the season."

Douglas listened to these scraps of talk with mingled feelings. Of course, he reflected, one was likely to meet all sorts of people at a place like the Imperial. The very name was enough! And three and a half guineas a week, exclusive of baths, seemed a terrible lot of money to be paying. He was partly pleased with the opportunity to meet the sort of people he had read about in books—rich people who lived in ancient country houses, and had family ghosts and homicidal ancestors—but he would have felt a little happier if Constance had been less highly connected. You see, he was greatly attracted by her appearance, and he did not wish to find himself in the unfortunate position of a moth which has been attracted by a star.

A few minutes later a piece of good fortune befell him. On her way out of the room Mrs. Brake not only tripped over one of his brogue-shod feet, but apologised for it, and

he was completely satisfied with the easy grace with which he responded "Granted."

After tea he went out by himself along the front and as far as the end of the pier to think things over. He knew he was in danger of falling in love with Constance Brake. To be sure, he had rather hoped to be in danger of falling in love with somebody while he was on his holiday, but he saw no sense in knocking his head against a brick wall and making himself sore and miserable. People like that would scorn him and his four pounds ten a week.

He began to feel heavy-hearted and depressed, as all serious natures do in the first stages of falling in love. There was no joy in the automatic machines. The revolving gipsy woman, whose finger points to your destiny, when the machinery stops, warned him to "Beware." Another machine which guaranteed to tell him his fortune, if he moved a disc around to the month of his birth and put a penny in the slot, disgorged a card which promised him long life, vast riches, and single blessedness. He only obtained comfort by putting another penny into the same machine and learning that, despite adverse appearances, his matrimonial partner loved him as much as she had ever done in the dear old courting days.

But his spirits insisted upon remaining a point or two below normal. The football machine, which gives you your penny back after every goal, if it happens to be in working order, interested him only for a minute or two. The working model of an execution in an English prison utterly failed to uplift him. The cricket machine which represented the Jam Sahib of Nawanagur bowling lobs to the late W. G. Grace bored him stiff. The vision of Constance Brake was ever before him.

On his way back to the Imperial he decided that, for the sake of his peace of mind, he would have nothing to do with Constance Brake. He had almost persuaded himself that she had already treated him badly. He knew "Lady Clara Vere de Vere" by heart—having been made to learn it at school for spilling ink on an exercise book—and there is some fine ringing, scornful stuff in "Lady Clara" for anybody who can put himself in the place of the bucolic lover. He liked that bit about the impressionable young yeoman named Laurence who had committed suicide because of her. "But there was that across his throat which you would hardly care to see!" Aha, that was the stuff to give them! He could imagine

himself properly ticking off Constance for having brought about a similar tragedy.

"Lady Constance Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of you."

So his thoughts drifted, and as they drifted

II.

DOUGLAS thought that he went to see Stuffins's Society Entertainers of his own free will. As a matter of fact, the hand of Fate had given him a kindly push in the right direction. He bought a two-shilling ticket at the little window outside, of which



his spirits revived. Back at the Imperial, a symposium of kitchen smells suggested the imminence of dinner. He found himself quite hungry, and as he had to sit with his back to the Brakes, he made quite a good meal. And the fried plaice was quite good.

His mind was now made up. He would avoid Constance and her mother. He would not seek to meet them or try to scrape acquaintanceship. It was only looking for trouble. So after dinner he went out to see Stuffins's Society Entertainers, who performed in a marquee on an eligible building site close to the esplanade.

a damsel immediately dispossessed him on entering, and ushered him into a seat next to Constance Brake, whose mother was sitting on the other side of her. Douglas did not know what to do, and pretended not to notice them. He sat like a stone through a very bad imitation of Sir Harry Lauder. It was while the artist was making the most of some half-hearted applause that Mrs. Brake caught his gaze and acknowledged him kindly. Leaning across to him, she said in a pleasant undertone: "We didn't expect to see you here."

It was a remark which gave no opening

for brilliant repartee. He smiled and muttered something, and Constance smiled, too. He found himself dropping into easy conversation with them between the items.

yawned through diaphanous fans at the most exquisite renderings of the great operas, but Mrs. Brake laughed quite heartily at the most threadbare jokes.



"He might almost have been a kinsman from the way Mrs. Brake treated him."

There was nothing haughty or stand-offish about mother or daughter.

The strange thing was that both the Brakes seemed to be enjoying the show. He had always believed that society ladies

Even when the very low comedian came on and sang an appalling ditty about sausages, mothers-in-law, lodgers, and husbands, Mrs. Brake sat listening with quite a bland smile, while Douglas was

trying unsuccessfully to look as if he couldn't hear.

Throughout the performance his arm was resting against Constance's, and once or twice, half involuntarily, the back of his hand touched hers. Each time a pleasant sort of electricity went through him. Long before the last turn came along he realised it was no use trying to fight against his destiny. He'd *got* to fall in love with that girl. It was ridiculous, it was mad, it was everything else that it shouldn't be, but there was the thing already half done, and himself a more than ready victim.

Of course he walked back with them, and Mrs. Brake's first question was concerning the length of his stay.

"Only a fortnight," he said regretfully.

"We shall be here another ten days," said Mrs. Brake. "We've been here nearly a week already. What do you think of the Imperial?"

Douglas said he thought it was quite nice.

"It amuses us more than the larger hotels," said Mrs. Brake. "One would meet so many of the people there that one knows in the ordinary way. But I think it does one good once in a while to mix with people that one would ordinarily not come across."

Douglas, who instantly placed himself in the category she had named, replied that he supposed that this was so.

"Of course," Mrs. Brake continued, "it doesn't matter much what one does in a seaside place where one isn't known. Constance is having the time of her life, and is getting quite out of hand. But girls do get a lot of freedom nowadays, don't you think? When I was a girl, I was never allowed outside the park alone. If I wanted to go into the village, and my father or one of my brothers was not available, I had to take one of the footmen with me."

Douglas, who felt himself to be out of his depth, began swimming desperately in the direction of safety. "Are you fond of motoring, Miss Brake?" he asked.

"Yes, awfully," Constance replied brightly, and seemed pleased that he had headed her mother off any more reminiscences of that lady's delicately-nurtured youth.

"We ought," said Mrs. Brake, "to have brought the De Dion with us, but our chauffeur wanted his holiday, too, and Constance and I are not very good drivers. We're both more at home on horseback, aren't we, Connie?"

Constance, thus appealed to, seemed to

take no notice of the remark. She had a queer way of ignoring her mother when that lady said things which might have been calculated to impress. In his heart of hearts Douglas never called Mrs. Brake a "swanker." Everything she said came from her lips so easy and naturally. In other people it would be "swank," but not so in her. And after all, he reflected, rich people could hardly be expected to go through life without an occasional reference to their chauffeurs and footmen.

"I've got my motor-bike with a pillion on the back," he ventured, speaking to Constance. "If you'd like to come out some time, and Mrs. Brake would let you——"

"I'm sure," said the mother, "that Constance will be delighted."

Constance not only said she would be, but looked delighted; and straightway they arranged a run on the following day.

That was the beginning of the affair. He went to bed that night in a mood to dream the impossible. Yet was it impossible? Dick Whittington had started worse than himself—with no other assets, according to tradition, than a change of linen in a red bundle, and an out-size in cats—but he had landed much the same sort of coup. After all, he was pretty sure of quick advancement, and he could make doubly sure by getting his memory trained and taking a postal course in some desirable business accomplishment. He had just been reading that admirably worded advertisement "The Life History of Boodles, the Man who Got his Blue by Correspondence."

On the following afternoon Douglas rode his motor-bicycle forty miles through Paradise, with Constance's hands resting lightly on his shoulders, and they had refreshment in some celestial tea-gardens, where even the sun-dried Madeira cake tasted like a food for the gods.

Constance made no reference at all to her ordinary life, and talked to him just as if she were one of his friends' sisters. She seemed to like him, and threw him into such a state of mind by showing it that she unwittingly imperilled her life and his on the homeward journey. Douglas was not by any means the safest driver on the road that afternoon.

After that the pair spent a great deal of their time together, with Mrs. Brake's evident good-will. Douglas simply did not understand it. He might almost have been a kinsman from the way Mrs. Brake treated

him, and their fellow-guests at the Imperial came to make arch remarks, for which Douglas would have loved to slap them, irrespective of sex or age.

Nine roseate days fled by before a cloud on the horizon, which had broadened and drawn nearer, at last loomed black and thunderous. That cloud was simply the imminent departure of the Brakes.

Douglas's own holidays were drawing to an end, but that of itself troubled him little. Shoremouth would be an empty town to him without Constance. For the first days he had banished all thought of the future; now they began to crowd upon him.

Mrs. Brake's kindness was of the unremitting sort, and she talked to him quite a lot, but she never suggested that she might some day see him at Sipton Homilly. As the day of their departure drew near, he became unpleasantly aware that she intended to drop him as lightly and pleasantly as she had taken him up. He was just a holiday acquaintance. Well, that was all he could have expected.

To do the boy justice, he had never pretended to them to be what he was not, and this was not entirely due to a desolating feeling that he would be promptly seen through. One of his employers had remarked that there was an honest streak in the young fellow which, unless eradicated, would handicap him all through life. The Brakes knew all about the office and the four pounds ten a week, and the diggings at Streatham. He was no adventurer; he loved Connie honestly, and he had no intention of declaring himself to her until some romantic revolution had occurred in his business career.

They went out for a ride together on that last afternoon, and he derived a melancholy satisfaction at seeing that the girl, too, looked depressed. He knew by this time that she knew that he was in love with her.

"Shall I see you here next year?" he asked, while they were at tea.

"Very likely. Mother seems to like Shoremouth."

He sighed. "It's a long time to wait. It's rotten that holidays only come once a year. I say, may I write to you sometimes?"

To his chagrin, she looked doubtful. "Mother doesn't like me to have letters," she said.

His face fell. Suddenly her eyes dimmed, and she checked herself in the act of making a little impulsive gesture.

"Well, just now and again, then," she said, "but not very often."

He cheered up a great deal then, and produced a notebook, although he could have trusted himself to remember her address even if she had lived in the heart of Wales.

"Just Sipton Homilly," she said. "That will always find me."

He had expected her to say Sipton Homilly Court or Sipton Homilly Place, but so long as a letter would find her, the precise address mattered nothing.

That night he went with her mother to hear Stuffins's Society Entertainers for the last time. Mr. Stuffins himself was the owner of a yearning baritone, and he sang, of all things, Tosti's "Parted." And as he sang "You must go back to your life, I must go back to mine," Douglas felt a little warm hand thrust into his, and he held it all through the song in an ecstasy of mingled joy and pain.

III.

DOUGLAS FARRANT "went back to his life" in a state of tragic melancholy. He allowed three weeks to pass, and then wrote a long letter to Constance. After a week he received back a brief and very formal acknowledgment on a piece of paper which had evidently been torn off a writing block. This, he reflected unhappily, was the mother's doing. Now that she was back in her own home, she wanted nothing more to do with him.

In a mood of deep dejection Douglas took his friend Jackson into his confidence. Jackson had a reputation for worldly wisdom and for being "a bit of a dog." He went about a lot at week-ends, and met all sorts of people. Douglas told him everything except the name of the Brakes and where they lived.

"My dear old bean," exclaimed Jackson, "why on earth don't you go and look them up?"

"Because they haven't asked me."

"Well, you don't expect people like that to run after you, do you? Although I got entangled with some people like that once myself, and had a job to shake them off. A baronet's daughter, too, but I didn't fancy her."

"But I couldn't go down there without them asking me, and I shouldn't know what to say when I did get there. I shouldn't even know what to say when the door opened. Is it a butler or a footman who opens the door, Jackson?"

"It depends," said Jackson guardedly, and added with some haste: "But look here, old thing. Suppose you were riding through their village on your motor-bike, there'd be no harm in your paying them a friendly call. In the circumstances it would be only the civil thing to do. And don't you be afraid of butlers. They're all right if you look at them hard enough and talk to them in the right way."

The idea of casually passing through Sipton Homilly had occurred to Douglas before. He had looked it up on the map, found it to be in the heart of Wiltshire, some distance from any main road or large town. To find an excuse for casually passing through it amounted almost to a mental feat. The best he could say was that as he was on his motor-bicycle on the main road ten miles away, he thought he would look in for ten minutes on his way home. You see, he was beginning to feel desperate, and even the thought of butlers did not deter him. Jackson's advice made up his mind.

He invented an invalid aunt for the following Saturday, obtained leave not to attend the office in the morning and rode right down into Salisbury in order that he might casually describe the city as if he had passed through it on his return journey. Then in the early afternoon he set out in earnest upon his quest. It was with a curious thrill that he saw the magic name Sipton Homilly for the first time on a finger-post.

Sipton Homilly proved to be an ugly and depressed-looking village consisting of two public houses, a jubilee fountain, three small shops, two bedraggled rows of cottages, and a miniature railway station. It was at the railway station that he prosecuted inquiries of a porter who was refreshing himself with cold tea out of a tin receptacle.

"Can you tell me," he asked, "where Mrs. Brake lives?"

The porter looked at him entirely without respect. "You mean at the post office?" the man replied.

"Oh, no," said Douglas, a little hurt. "It wouldn't be at the post office."

"It's the grocer's shop as well, you know," the porter said helpfully.

Douglas shook his head. "It wouldn't be those people," said he.

"Well, there aren't any other Brakes about here that I've heard of," the porter said. "It's Mrs. Brake and her daughter as keeps the post office. Old Brake 'ad it before he died. He used to be butler up at Mr. Wellburn's place."

Douglas shook his head and remounted his machine. The man, he thought, was a fool. Still, it was strange that he shouldn't know the names of important people who lived in the near neighbourhood. That Mrs. Brake should keep the post office and village stores was simply absurd, but it was worth while inquiring there, for they would surely know where their illustrious namesakes lived.

The combination of post office and village stores proved to be a typical village shop, with a letter-box outside, and two small windows overcrowded with an uninviting display of sweets and groceries. A bell jangled on the door as he stepped down into a dark interior. A burly village woman with an enormous shopping basket obscured his view of the counter. She was talking to somebody invisible behind a stack of tins, where half a pound of margarine was being weighed out for her.

A moment later Douglas's heart missed a beat. It was Constance herself who hove in sight and handed the margarine to the customer. They gossiped for a long minute, while he stood in the background, in an agony of embarrassment, wondering what to do or say. But in the midst of it all he was glad. Joy sang in his heart and in his brain. Being what she was, she was within his reach. He had not loved a great lady; he had just loved Constance. And Constance, short of refraining from giving her mother the lie, had never pretended.

The village woman turned away and brushed past him. Constance turned to serve her next customer. The bell on the door was already jangling behind the woman before Constance recognised him. Then she uttered a little startled cry, her eyes stared, and the colour flooded her face.

"Douglas! O-oh!"

"Connie! Oh, Connie, I'm so glad!"

She ignored his hand. Shame flaming in her face had not bereft her of dignity. She stood quite still, facing him, her eyes steadfast, her head held high.

"I don't know what you think of us," she said in a subdued voice.

"You know ~~what~~ I think of *you*," he answered. "You know I love you. I'm so glad to find you—like this."

"Oh, don't talk like that, please! After we've pretended——"

"You didn't pretend. I see it all now. Oh, Connie, I wish I'd known all along! I've had a wretched time. You see, I thought——"

He broke off suddenly. He looked very sincere just then, very lovable to a girl whose pride was mangled and smarting. After a moment's hesitation she took the

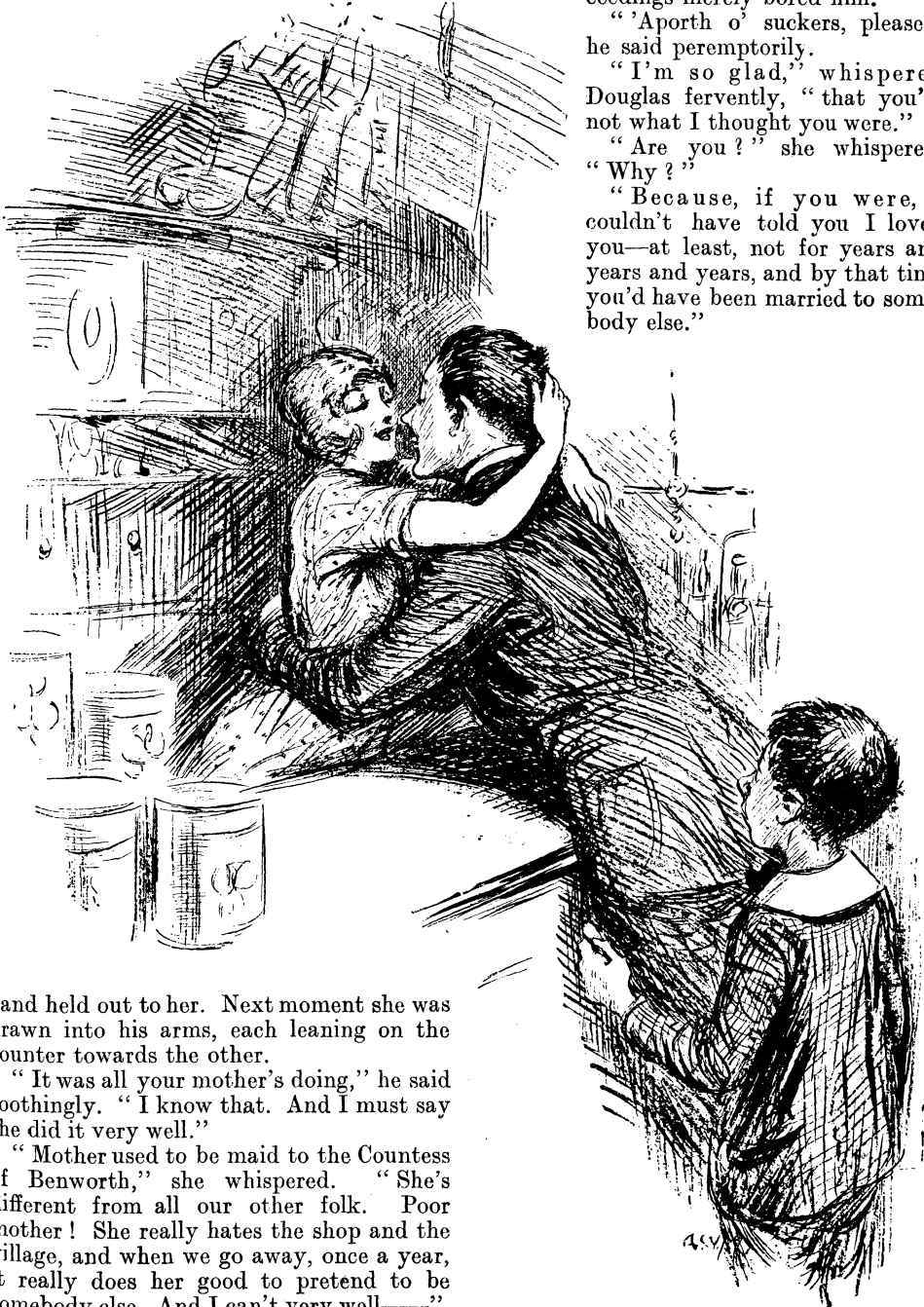
The bell on the door rang, but neither of them heard it. A small boy entered and stood behind Douglas. He was not a lad with a keen dramatic sense, and the proceedings merely bored him.

"Apoth o' suckers, please," he said peremptorily.

"I'm so glad," whispered Douglas fervently, "that you're not what I thought you were."

"Are you?" she whispered. "Why?"

"Because, if you were, I couldn't have told you I loved you—at least, not for years and years and years, and by that time you'd have been married to somebody else."



hand held out to her. Next moment she was drawn into his arms, each leaning on the counter towards the other.

"It was all your mother's doing," he said soothingly. "I know that. And I must say she did it very well."

"Mother used to be maid to the Countess of Benworth," she whispered. "She's different from all our other folk. Poor mother! She really hates the shop and the village, and when we go away, once a year, it really does her good to pretend to be somebody else. And I can't very well——"

"No, no," he agreed, "of course you can't."

"He was not a lad with a keen dramatic sense, and the proceedings merely bored him."

"And you couldn't have told me then, I hope!" she said severely.

"'Ere, give us a naporth o' suckers," said the small boy, frowning.

"Will you marry me as soon as I'm earning six pounds a week? Oh, Connie, I do love you!"

"I—I don't know. I don't know what mother will say now that you've found us out. She's at the back. You—you must come in and see her, Douglas."

"Aw right," growled the small boy, "I'll get 'em at Smith's."

He slouched out, scowling. Neither heard him go. Constance lifted up a flap of the counter for Douglas to pass through, and opened a low door at the back of the shop.

"Mother," she called out, "Douglas is here!"

Mrs. Brake was ironing in the parlour beyond. Be it written of her that she did not turn a hair. She was that kind of woman. Moreover, she still wore her old manner and gave Douglas a gracious hand.

"How delightful to see you again!" she said. "So kind of you to come and see us as you were passing through. Motoring, I see! We were just going to have tea. You will join us, of course? Richardson!"

The last word was uttered in a tone of ringing command. A diminutive fourteen-year-old servant maid blundered ungracefully into the room.

"Have the goodness to prepare tea for three, Richardson," said Mrs. Brake.

AVALON.

THERE'S rose and gold in Somerset:

There's rose and gold and blue:

A loveliness you can't forget,

Whatever else you do.

There's mystery in Somerset:

A wonder and a light:

Of amethyst and violet

Upon the hills at night.

And oh, the air of Somerset

Is scented deep and sweet

With lavender and mignonette

And harvesting of wheat!

The earth's ablaze in Somerset

And crimson as the dawn,

For never rains have quenched as yet

The fires of Avalon.

Since Avalon is Somerset,

Where legend all comes true:

A Land of Dream you can't forget,

Whatever else you do!

CLAUDINE CURREY.



"Almost without sensible movement, he was across the room to the far side, feeling out the shape and details of the wall cabinet, adjusting his sight to the ghostly reflection of moon glow."

THE BURGLAR

By JOHN RUSSELL

ILLUSTRATED BY W. SMITHSON BROADHEAD

THREE steps short of the third floor, and he stopped and grinned to himself inside the blinding mask of the dark, feeling with careful finger-tips.

He found the wire at the side, plucked it out in loop, and severed it neatly, finishing off each end with a scrape of the knife from mechanical habit of thoroughness.

Then he lifted himself over, without even touching that step, as a wolf might break a snare and still shun it in sheer excess of wild caution. He crawled on to the landing. The house was dead as the tomb behind him as he slid along the passage to the rear room.

He was noiseless. He was sure. He was quick. His pulse kept temperate beat in his throat. His muscles responded smoothly, slipping with silken, steely precision to do his will. His eyes were clear and steady as a cat's. His ear-drums were tuned to finest perception. Every sense of his spare, wiry body was alert, thin-drawn.

His was the keen, gaunt perfection of training that the starving thing of prey attains.

For some twenty hours he had not eaten. For some three weeks he had not known a full meal. For some twenty-six years—all he could boast—he had never enjoyed the chance to blunt his fine animal appetites or to dull his fine animal equipment with satiety.

It was in him to live, to endure, to keep his strength where the weaker went to the wall. His nature was the tough, tenacious, elastic, close-compacted metal that does not snap.

Resistless poverty had ground him upon its whetting edge. Remorseless labour had shaped and hardened him. Relentless hunger had driven him forth at last, a cutting tool, finished and ready for crime.

And now he had found his work.

Thin bands of moonlight cut in at an angle through the windows of the rear room. They were big windows, reaching from floor to ceiling, and barred to waist height with graceful iron grilles. They were wide open upon the garden below.

He curled in the heavy shadow along the wall near the door and watched, listened.

Vagrant breaths of the summer night stirred the curtains. Vague rumours of the sleeping city stole mysteriously from the void. Nothing more.

Between the winkings, almost without sensible movement, he was across the room to the far side, feeling out the shape and details of the wall cabinet, adjusting his sight to the ghostly reflection of moon glow.

The outer section of the cabinet was a writing-desk. A blind, according to his tip. He slipped the bent end of the burnished instrument he carried—his sole outfit—against the edge of the lock.

The smooth lifting pressure gave him his first heave of effort, his first thrill of power. He had a ton at command in that leverage. And the lid came away like the top of a wet cardboard box.

He could make out the interior of the desk dimly. A model desk; there were pigeon-holes, paper-trays, two rows of shallow wooden drawers. At least, the veneer was of wood, and each inlaid panel was furnished with a neat little glass knob.

His tip saved him the trouble that would have been necessary to establish the incidental fact that behind the trays and the pigeon-holes, behind the false fronts and the glass knobs, stood a solid foot of chrome steel plates.

Swiftly, still relying on that valuable tip, he began to unscrew the tiny glass knobs from the imitation drawer panels. As he drew each knob off, he pressed the tiny screw shaft that was left standing in the wood, and each time he paused expectant. Even the wonderful tip could not tell him which was the vital knob.

It proved to be the fourth on the left-hand row.

When he pressed, the fourth screw gave like a tiny plunger. The operating current closed. Springs released with an oily snick, and the whole interior of the cabinet moved outward from the wall in a solid, silent swing like the shift of a scenic illusion.

It was a dainty job. The steps of it fitted like the parts of a jigsaw picture. No hitch, no hurry, no gap, no confusion. He foresaw, he judged, he made the adequate gesture, he applied the exact necessary force, and the act was complete.

It took him three minutes to open the small inner compartment. Three minutes that passed without a jar, without an audible breath, without a hasty movement. Three minutes until he caught the shock

of the snapping steel with deft balance of body, with perfect release of joint and sinew.

He did not grab.

He searched the inner compartment lightly with one hand. When he drew it out, it brought a tiny, flat, leather-bound casket. Kneeling there beside the open door of the safe at the edge of the moonlight band, he turned back the cover of the casket.

The moment of success is the test of the criminal. Achievement shows the nerve of the social wolf. Method, judgment, readiness retain their steadfast, savage purpose—or weaken and fumble in the flurry of desire.

He was under full control. His brain was level, cool. His heart had not jumped a stroke. He kept everything he had used about him. Nothing was mislaid. He knew his precise position. He was ready to flit on the instant, leaving no mark, no clue behind. He was fit. He proved it now.

Gently he picked out the thing that nestled in the casket on its velvet bed.

He lifted the thing between finger and thumb, as one might lift a sparrow's egg, and held it before him so that the moonlight fell upon it and was knotted there in a tangle of pale glory and was wafted through in delicate strands of spectral splendour.

He gazed, quietly fascinated, not by the beauty of what he saw, but by what it meant to him.

A sound beat upon his ear—from close at hand—in the same room. He turned his head with bird-like quickness. For the rest he did not move, did not start.

"Keep it right there," said a voice dryly, calmly.

He kept it there.

"Just as you are," advised the voice.

He obeyed the suggestion.

"Pretty effect."

A figure detached itself from the shadows about the doorway. As it advanced into the moonlight, it was revealed as that of a man, tall, powerfully-built, massively-shouldered.

He was draped in an ample dressing-gown, hanging loose and untied. He carried a big revolver in his fist carelessly, with the ease of habit. He had the air of one just aroused from a nap, and not at all excited by the incident.

He must have been a magnificent specimen of physical development at one time, this man. Even now he was little more than just beyond the ripeness of his powers. A fleshly droop under the eyes scarce marred his hard-cut features. A certain grossness

about the body seemed no clog upon his strength. A heeling tread was as formidable without the spring and litheness it must once have owned.

He was still young, in spite of the marks of indulgence, easy, masterful, and sure in every gesture.

He stood regarding the glistening marvel in the moonshine for an appreciable moment. Then he reached out casually with his free hand.

"I'll take it. Thanks!"

He turned his bold, confident face down upon the burglar with a grimly humorous smile. The burglar knelt staring up at him, immobile. Idly, almost indifferently, the big man's big hand closed over the extended fingers, took the prize, weighed it an instant, and passed it to a waistcoat pocket.

His eyes were still fixed upon the burglar in lazy mockery. It was all so easy a triumph.

"Get up!"

The voice was deeper and shorter now that the dramatic effectiveness of the incident was complete.

The burglar stood up.

The big man inspected him. His lip lifted as he took in the other's commonplace exterior. His glance sharpened as he noted each detail of lean wretchedness, of furtive shabbiness.

He dominated his captive in pride and arrogance, scowling down at him.

"And you're the lad who thought he could lift the Rangely diamond!" he exclaimed incredulously. "You!"

He continued his survey.

"Here's ambition!"

But his curious glance travelled beyond to the rifled safe, standing wide, and suddenly sarcasm was not adequate to him.

"How did you do that?"

It rumbled from him in quick anger—the anger of privileged grievance and righteous disappointment.

"How did you get that open?"

The burglar said nothing.

The big head sank forward. The voice slid down another note.

"Look here"—his restraint of word was ominous—"I think you'd better answer up promptly, like a wise little man. I've a mind, anyway, to smash you like a bug. It'd please me a whole lot, and there's nothing to stop me, you know. I want to hear how a creature like you managed to waltz right into that safe. I'm waiting."

There was something rawer and closer than menace in the tone.

"I got a tip," answered the burglar sullenly.

"Where?"

"Off—a guy."

"What guy?"

"Usta work for a safe company."

There was silence between them for a while—a silence because the big man was pulling at the band of his collar.

"Never had to force it at all?"

"No."

"Never even figured to force it?"

"No."

"Well, you're some master hand, ain't you? Then what?"

"I watched."

"The house?"

"Yes."

"Go on."

"And the newspapers."

"Well?"

"I saw where the old lady—where Mrs. Rangely was jumped to the hospital yest'd'y, and her husban' hired a room to be near her."

"And—the son?"

"I saw where it said the son was livin' at some club or 'nother."

"Servants?"

"I saw the last of 'm go out two hours ago."

"Some student! Some clever crook, eh? So then you thought you had your chance?"

"Yes."

"Having doped it all down to a fine point like they do in the books, you thought you'd just happen along and scoop up the Rangely diamond. You thought that?"

"Yes."

"I bet you fell into the wires a dozen times on your way up. Do you know that stairway is wired?"

"Yes."

"Do, eh? Where?"

The burglar told him.

"And you dodged the connections?"

"I cut 'm."

Sudden wrath flared in the questioner.

"Why, where did you get the brazen check to think of a coup like this? Say, who the hell are you, anyhow? Tell me that."

He gathered the slack of the dressing-gown under an arm and took one heavy stride. The huge revolver jammed against the captive's ribs. The hard-jawed face sneered into his with brutal contempt.

"Did you ever turn a big trick?"

"No."

"Did you ever crack a crib?"

"No."

"Did you ever pull off anything above petty larceny in your life?"

He emphasised each question with the gun muzzle.

"No," muttered the burglar.

"Then what are you doing here? Christmas! I hoped it was somebody of some account. I hoped, anyway, it might be somebody. Have you got any record of any kind?"

"No."

"And still you had the gall to go after the Rangely diamond! Didn't you know the best men in the business would have their work cut out to cop such a prize? Didn't you know the smartest operators in the world would be none too smart for this job—men like Max Shimburn, or Perry, or even Meadow himself? And you sticking your dirty little paws into the game!"

He gave a final thrust that sent the other spinning back upon the door of the safe.

The act of violence seemed to make him aware for the first time of the curious height to which his surge of personal resentment had risen.

He laughed a little harshly.

"Why, look at me getting all fussed up," he observed.

He considered a minute. When he spoke again his voice had regained something of its former dry calm. His manner, too, had reverted somewhat to the self-appreciatory dramatic.

"We'll teach you a lesson," he decided. "We'll teach you to stick to frisking and till breaking and good second storey work, where you belong."

The burglar stared at him.

"You need to be shown, you guttersnipe. You need to be put in your proper place. Jobs like this are not for such as you. I'll prove it to your satisfaction."

No whimsically cruel punishment would have seemed beyond the possible fancy of that contemptuous colossus.

"Beat it!" he growled.

The burglar still stared.

"That's what. You're not important enough. I'm giving you just what you're worth. I'm ignoring you. Understand? On your way out of this house and don't linger!"

He stood there in the moonlight, a powerful, commanding figure, smiling to himself once more at his conceit, restored to casual amusement by his own fanciful disposal of the situation and the effective little play

he had made of it. The picture of confidence, strength, and assurance.

For an instant longer the burglar stared, expressionless. Perhaps he was too crushed to understand. The big man banished him with a gesture.

He obeyed.

He slid away from the safe. He glided along the side of the room. He did not even look back from the doorway. He passed into the hall, to the head of the stairs. He began his descent, an audible descent.

He obeyed.

But at the third stair from the top he introduced a trifling variation into the manner of retreat.

He stayed for an instant—just the fleeting fraction of a minute—while his weight bore upon the step, while he stooped, while his nimble fingers found two free ends of the severed wire and touched, merely touched, the exposed tips of copper one upon the other.

When he continued his flight, it was as if he had not paused at all.

He obeyed.

But at the second floor he deviated again from the letter of his instructions.

He left the balustrade and crept down the hall toward the rear room, just as he had done at his first entrance. The rear room was similar to the one above. Like that, it was empty. Like that, its windows opened wide on the garden side.

The burglar made straight to the farther window. He lifted himself over the ornamental grille. The framework gave him a handhold.

At the back of the house next to the Rangely residence was a one-storey conservatory extension. It was vine-grown, flat-roofed.

He knew the exact measurement of the gap from the window ledge to the coping of that roof. He bridged it in a step. For such a space he was in the full eye of the moon. For such a space as a cat needs to dart across a fence. After that he disappeared from view at the extreme rear end of the conservatory roof in the black shadow of the chimney that raised its square bulk like a tower.

He had obeyed, now he waited.

For all his alertness, he was never quite certain whence came the first definite sign of results. Nor exactly when it came.

But presently there was some living presence in the garden below him. Presently, too, he knew that feet were softly astir

in the basement of the Rangely house. At about the same time he was made aware of furtive movement in the side-street, beyond the wall that hedged the garden two houses above. And, glancing up at the skyline of the block, he had a glimpse of a helmet spotted against the star dust for a wink.

It was a circling attack, collected and delivered with a promptness, an energy, a cautious eagerness that offered startling proof of the standing of the Rangely family, the importance of the Rangely residence, and the value of the Rangely possessions in the anxious view of the authorities.

It came out of the void of the sleeping city, starting at the flicker of a needle on a dial, centring like a sweep of hornets, closing with a full cordon.

To an observer of ordinary police methods it might have seemed amazing, almost supernatural. To the initiated it might have furnished a cynical commentary on the efficiency that is reserved for the need of the wealthy and the great.

No slighting a call from that locality. The response was swift and adequate.

Meanwhile the man who crouched unseen in the shadow of the chimney on the observatory wing fixed his gaze upon the third-floor windows of the Rangely house.

Those windows were large. They were open from floor to ceiling. From this vantage some fifty feet away he was placed so as to command a low-angled sweep of vision over the sills.

He waited as a man in the pit waits for the rise of the curtain. And when it did lift, it went up on a smash of tense action.

A muffled sound came from the depths of the house—the first challenge, the stamp of feet, then two bursting shots.

"Stand!" bellowed a bull voice. "Who's there? Stand, or I'll fire again!"

The rush had checked on the stairs. Evidently a competent revolver was commanding that well.

"Inspector Lavery and ten men," came the answer.

A pause, dropping in like the suck of a wave before its breaking. A pause that was tense with possibilities and indecision.

Then—

"Police?" rumbled the big voice. "What's all the excitement?"

The third floor rear leaped with sudden radiance as the bulbs were switched on.

"All right, police."

Upon the brilliantly lighted stage beyond the open windows appeared a knot of blue

uniforms. Crowding in the doorway, the policemen found themselves confronted by a young giant in a dressing robe who faced them coolly, a fisted weapon hanging by his side.

"Inspector Lavery?" he inquired.

"Charmed, I'm sure. How did you get in?"

The inspector came forward.

"Walked in," he returned crisply.

"The front door was open for all and sundry. And you, Mr. —."

"Rangely is my name."

The inspector looked him over.

"You live here?" he inquired, with considerably less rasp to his tone.

"At present, in the absence of my parents. But I don't understand. The open door? The outer door?"

"And an alarm was touched from here about seven minutes ago."

"It was automatic. You have heard nothing? No disturbance in the house?"

"Not until I was awakened by tramping on the stairs and fired at random just now."

"You're quick with a gun," commented the inspector grimly. "The servants?"

"Gone for the night."

The inspector turned his head.

"Well?"

"Nothing, sir," came a respectful answer from the hall. Everything seems to be all right. We've covered the house."

"Is Devlin satisfied?"

"I'll ask him to report, sir."

The inspector looked again at the big, confident, easily interested young man who occupied the middle of the floor. Nothing could have been more reassuring, more solid and untroubled than that same young man.

"Perhaps I forgot to close the door when I came in," he was saying. "Perhaps I even touched the alarm. I'm not very familiar with the arrangements. Anyway"—he waved a casual hand, while he dropped the revolver carelessly in his dressing-gown pocket—"anyway, here is the house, and here am I. Quite at your service, but in no danger that I know of."

The inspector hesitated.

In the pause, through the attendant group in the doorway, came thrusting an awkward, undersized man in common clothes, who dropped a suit-case at the inspector's feet with a bang and grinned with a most evil squint.

"Well, Devlin?"

"Front room—found 'em under the bed in the front room," announced the newcomer, in a quaint, chuckling cackle. "Jes' set yer lamps on 'em!"

He kicked open the suit-case as it lay.

Every man within earshot stood transfixed.

"A classy a set of openers as y'll ever sec," observed Mr. Devlin, rubbing his hands with extraordinary gusto. "Money can't buy no better. They ain't made no better. Poems. A package of poems in steel, sir. That's what they are—poems!"

The inspector looked up sharply.

"That all?"

"Except that the boy who owned 'em has been making himself comfortable in that front room this evening. Reg'ler lordin' it. Must 'a' took a nap in there. Nerve. How about it for nerve?"

"You hear this, Mr.—Rangely?"

The host shrugged in frank surprise.

"Extraordinary. Apparently someone has been here, after all."

The meagre individual who had brought the suit-case turned towards the speaker, dropping his head with a curious twist. A misshapen finger plucked the inspector's arm.

"Who does he say he is?"

"Young Rangely."

"Well, he ain't," cackled Devlin, squinting. "Herbert Rangely's about the size and shape of a stewed prune. This boy'd make six—— *Look out!*"

A flash of steel from the dressing-gown pocket was swift, but no swifter than the thin spurt of yellow flame that jumped to meet it.

The report was drowned in a shock of sound like the thunder of a torrent, prisoned and plunging for freedom, a roar that pulsed with the wild fury of untamed forces, cornered and struggling.

Through the haze of the electric light on that third-floor stage a gigantic figure flailed amid a writhing mass of blue, and drove with mighty limbs toward the nearest window.

Steadily it made its way, like some slow-moving polyp of the depths, impeded but unmastered by clinging incrustations.

It seemed that nothing could stop it.

It reached the window, it caught the grille, it hurled itself bodily at space with one magnificent heave.

But there it stayed.

The captors would not loosen. They were many, and others came to help. The whole

invading force joined the tussle. And the many were too many.

After a moment of swaying doubt the centre of the fight collapsed. The group bore back and drew its vortex with it. The roaring ceased. Silence, rushing in, was like an ache in the ears of men.

A rippling police whistle called the last of the inspector's reserves.



"*Look out!*"

But there was no more resistance in the giant. Standing once more in the middle of the room under the lights, half-naked, great breast heaving, legs wide apart, he submitted while they snapped his wrists together behind his back, defiant, cursing with his blazing beast's eyes, but beaten.

"By Heavens," broke from him in a gust, "you'd never 'a' got me if you hadn't put that bullet through my arm!"

"Don't you fool yourself!"

It was the detective Devlin who answered. He was peering up at the captive with button-bright eyes and rubbing his hands briskly.

"Don't you fool yourself. We got you because your time had come. How about that for a little suggestion? Two years ago you'd 'a' popped through that window, bullet and all, cops and all, and hell itself

couldn't 'a' stopped you. You could 'a' done it then. But not now. Not now. It ain't in you no more. How d'you like the notion?"

The prisoner snarled down at him, crimson-faced.

Devlin cackled.

"Don't like it, eh? It's true. Two years more of success—two years more of easy

comin'—the time when you'd be done, like all the rest."

The big man had gone from poppy red to wax white.

"Shut up, you little fiend! You don't know anything about me," he choked.

"Oh, don't I?" cackled Devlin, springing back and pointing a crooked finger. "I wonder! I wonder if I don't—Mr. Meadow,



"A flash of steel from the dressing-gown pocket was swift, but no swifter than the thin spurt of yellow flame that jumped to meet it."

money, two years more of foolish water,
two years more of loafin' and smokes
and gambling, of white ways and morris
chairs—that's what's done it for you, ol'
boy!"

He plucked a roll of fat along the big man's ribs. He prodded his grossness. He pointed out the sag of the cheeks and the thinning at the temples, while the captive raged

All with the veriest nonchalance, the impersonal interest of the clinical demonstrator.

Only the glittering little eyes betrayed a more concrete meaning behind.

"That's what's the matter, ol' boy. Pretty tough. But you must 'a' seen it comin'. A man like you, with such opportunities! You must 'a' seen the time

Mr. Silver-gilt, Silk-stockings Meadow, Mr. Sportin'-life, Top-notcher Meadow, Mr. Jim Meadow, of nowhere, wanted everywhere, last seen somewhere, and headed anywhere ! I wonder if I don't ! ”

A babble of excited tongues burst at the name.

"Are you sure, Devlin?" cried the inspector. "Meadow! He's never been caught!"

"Look at his face," triumphed the detective. "It's writ there. He's never been caught, no. That's why I got his goat so easy. Look at him!"

In fact, the prisoner could not control himself to put on a denial. Chagrin and rage held him helpless.

"James B. Meadow," chuckled Devlin.

"Kid-glove crook, gentleman burglar—the master that never yet did a day in stir. I got one flash at him once, and that's as near as anybody has ever come to him before."

"There he is. And we got him because his time was come. Ripe. He was ripe, and we picked him, that's all!"

It was a bit of theatricalism to have suited the taste of the prisoner himself, had the lines and the supers and the properties been somewhat altered.

He held the centre. The police gathered about him with avid, exultant eyes, like a pack of hounds that have brought the biggest boar of the chase to bay.

"I only wish we'd got him at work," observed the inspector, dwelling on him fondly. "This is too tame a way to gather a man with his record."

But in the interval Devlin had discovered the wall cabinet. He swung it wide with a chuckle.

"Oh, I guess it ain't so tame as you think! That's the Rangely safe, chief. You may have heard of it!"

"Cracked?"

"You bet!" Devlin's eyes were like points of fire. "And chief—this—this is where the Rangely diamond lives."

But the inspector was first to find the inner compartment—empty.

"Then it's moved," he commented dryly.

Devlin forgot to cackle.

"Don't tell me——" he began, and stopped.

He scratched his head.

"Let's see them tools!"

He swung round to the suit-case and pounced on the steel gems it contained.

"Meadow," he snapped, jumping up, "you never cracked that safe."

"Didn't I?" sneered the prisoner.

Devlin was at the cabinet again, examining the mechanism.

"No, you didn't. The outer door's been worked with its proper combination. Not cracked at all. Them glass drawer knobs have something to do with it, and I shouldn't wonder—— And if it was you who used the combination—why'd you bring all them tools and a pint of soup? No. You came expecting to blow her out. Don't tell me!"

The prisoner smiled superior.

"The inner box has been forced all right," continued Devlin. "But the guy never had your beauty outfit. He wouldn't need it. He used a plain jemmy. And he didn't work like you."

"No?"

"I know your signature, ol' boy. See here, what's it mean?"

The prisoner shrugged.

Devlin shook an ugly finger under his nose.

"That diamond's been took, Meadow. If you got a pal——"

Meadow laughed at him.

"No, not that," acknowledged Devlin, totally at a loss. "You never took one. But there's been a picturesque evenin' around here, first and last. Come across, ol' boy. What was it?"

The prisoner smiled.

Devlin watched him with bright, squinting eyes, head dropped askew, boring at him.

"I might have guessed!" he breathed.

"Of course. Somebody beat you to it! Waterloo! It's your Waterloo, this night. Fat, and flabby, and off your game, and you fall asleep in the next room while somebody nips the boodle! The time had to come. It came to-night—all at once—all in a swoop. First you lose one of the best cribs you ever tackled, and then you get 'pinched' on the spot. Dished! 'Pinched' beside another feller's leavin's! Dished! Done!"

He cackled into the captive's face.

Meadow had gone white as death again under the jeering lash the detective wielded so skilfully. But he held himself with an effort.

"Think so?"

"I know so. And tell you, Meadow—let me tell you one thing. Listen!"

He laid finger into palm and emphasised each word slowly.

"The crook that got that diamond—whoever he was—is a better crook than you. He may be a slob. He may be a green hand—likely he was, with that jemmy. But to come and crack the crib you was after under your nose, and *such* a crib! And to get away with the plum!"

"Meadow, I'm glad to get you. But if I had a chance to bargain, I'd exchange you in a minute—yes, ten like you, like what you are now—for just one good look at that feller."

"He's goin' to make trouble, big trouble. It may take years to find him. It may be years before he loses his punch and goes off his game like you. I tell you, you're done! You're no account! And him—he's just comin'!"

The quivering captive could endure no more. His pride, his self-love, his egotism—

the monstrous, bloated egotism of the criminal—had been slashed to the quick.

He cried out under it, as Devlin had meant he should.

"Is that so?" he yelled hoarsely. "Well, that's all the good you are, you shrimpy sleuth! Done? I may be a little out of training. I may have run into a rotten string of luck. But I'll show you whether I'm done or not. Yes, there was another guy on this job. Yes, he tried to butt in on my crib. And how far did he get with it, do you suppose? How far do you think I let him travel with my crib? He was a snivelling little wharf-rat. Somehow, by dumb luck, he had picked up the secret of that safe. By more dumb luck he got the diamond. And then—I blew him back where he belonged.

"I'm done, am I? Feel here—in what you've left of my waistcoat—the right-hand pocket"

Devlin sprang to him smiling.

"I hand it to you, Jim," he cackled. "You're a wonder! Gents"—he fumbled in the pocket, while the bluecoats pressed eagerly around—"gents, we have here that well-known wonder of the world, famed in story and song—the Rangely diamond!"

There was a moment's strained silence in the rear room of the third floor, on that lighted stage offered to the windows of the night.

Then Devlin's curiously hushed addition cut across it.

"Rangely h-ell! It's glass! It's one of them glass knobs off—that—blasted—safe—front!"

Such was the crisis of that impromptu midnight drama. It is likely that it might have afforded further interest.

But the audience did not wait to see. The audience had had enough. The audience was quite content to leave the action at that point, and to slip gently down the vine-laddered wall of the conservatory.

Safely on the ground, he began a circum-spect flight over the fences and through the yards to the far end of the block, unsuspected and unpursued.

He was noiseless. He was sure. He was quick. He gave his undivided attention to the problem of getting back to his lair. He was the keen hunting prowler of the night. He had made his kill. He had done more, he had stricken down and removed from the meat trail a competitor who had interfered with his quest, a rival whose cunning had failed to match his own, a fellow-wolf whose day was done.

Now he was hurrying away with his unsatisfied hunger and his lusting appetite, hurrying toward the appeasement of that hunger and that lust. But even in his triumph, even in his hour of success, he did not slacken a nerve from his savage tension, his readiness, his craft, his precision. For he was perfectly fitted for the work of prey. And he had never yet known satiety.

Only once he relaxed, when it was quite safe. Under the edge of a garden wall, where the moonshine filtered among the lilac bushes, he took from his pocket and held in the cup of his hands for a moment a thing, a glorious delicate drop of shimmery light—the Rangely diamond.



THE EIGHT-ARMED PIRATE

THE ADVENTURES OF AN OCTOPUS

By L. R. BRIGHTWELL, F.Z.S.

Illustrated by the Author

HE sat on a boulder in five fathoms of water at the Pavilion end of Stonebeach Pier. It is usual in romances to describe the hero at some length, the moment he steps upon the stage; so, not to violate tradition, we would make known at once that the hero seated on the rock looked like nothing so much as a tennis ball with eight comatose grass snakes attached to it by their thicker extremities. Looking more closely through the muddy jade-green water, one saw that the snakes were really indiarubber-like thongs, each with its under-surface studded with a double row of apparently pearl beads. Further, the tennis ball was ornamented, just above the point where it joined the rubber thongs, with a pair of eyes—yellow eyes with slits for their pupils. These slits, being set horizontally, gave the creature's expression that hideous blend of sensuous imbecility and cold, calculating cruelty to be seen upon the visage of the goat. Behind the sinuous arms there projected some three inches of pipe, half an inch, perhaps, in diameter. The said pipe protruded first on one side, then on the other of its extraordinary owner, and it contracted and expanded fitfully, as did the whole creature, in a manner horrible to see.

A yard or two away there showed, close to the rubble-covered waste that formed the sea-bed thereabouts, some three score fishing lines with variously baited hooks. The annual meeting of the Stonebeach Deep Sea Anglers' Association was in progress. The baits consisted of skate, whelk, squid,

bread-paste, hermit crabs, worms—both genuine and counterfeit—and hung in a long wavering line, a veritable free lunch counter for such few creatures as might wander thus far shorewards. Of course the crabs were busy—they constituted the principal catch of the patient humans on the pier above. The creature on the rock, apparently as apathetic as its limestone perch, was, and had been for some time, intently watching these same crabs. A half-grown eating crab, such as one sees in the fishmonger's shop, was tentatively hovering before the row of baits. It approached the end of the line—the end nearest to the ogre on his limestone perch. For some reason best known to themselves, no other crabs had dared to wander thus far. The edible crab, with claws waving and the bewildering array of razors, combs, and brushes that formed his mouth fluttering in feverish expectancy, suddenly took hold upon a tempting piece of cuttle-fish. The line tightened as the hopeful one above commenced to reel in. Up went the crab, two, four, six inches, a foot clear of the bottom, and in a flash the ogre sprang into a terrible activity. Crimson and chestnut chased each other over its dun-coloured body in an endless succession of waves. The eyes shone with a bright cold, yellow light, and the eight long arms with the globular body behind them came curling through the water. In a flash they folded themselves, coil upon coil, about the unsuspecting crab. Crab and octopus rose together through the water and broke the

surface amid a gasp and a ripple of excitement from the, till now, apathetic crowd. The crab held on, but already the beaded arms—each bead a vacuum sucker as tenacious in its hold as any glue—were beginning to relax their grip. The body then flung itself clear and fell with a squelch and a plop back into the sea.

breadth escape from the dreaded "devil fish." The old fisherman who later found a dead octopus on the beach exhibited the same, at a penny a head, until the sanitary authorities stepped in. He was a public hero. Earnest young scientists in marine biological stations round the coast talked calmly and interestingly to feverish



"Perched on a rock . . . he looked the devil that he was."

But the crowd above had seen enough. What matter empty creels and tangled lines? Octopus! The magic word sent a thrill of horrific delight through the little gathering, passed down the crowded pier, spread itself east and west along the promenade, and so into the larger world beyond the Stonebeach terminus. The bather who next day actually ran into a monster jelly-fish was reported by rumour to have had a hair-

reporters. The reporters admitted the interest of the information, but deemed it—as delivered by science—altogether too tasteless for public consumption. They "wrote it up." Bad men in distant Fleet Street, who had never seen and never would see an octopus, knew what was wanted better than the scientists, and served up octopus—gigantic octopus—upon a million breakfast tables daily, until the

sensation had run its course. For the smallest octopus is worth a hundred sea-serpents, no matter what their size, when regarded as an asset to "the silly season."

* * * * *

Meanwhile the cause of all this feverish excitement sank through the murky water till he reached the bottom, there to live his life.

Such a vast amount of almost incredible nonsense has been penned concerning the octopus that the present writer can scarcely take sufficient pains to adhere rigidly to fact. Let it be admitted, therefore, at the outset, that of the octopus, as of all other denizens of the deep, our knowledge is both scanty and uncertain. As the writer sits here to-night, penning this brief history, or the reader a month hence may sit reading the same in his home or at the club, tireless men will be examining every quarter of the seven seas. They work by shore-hunting, trawling, dredging (in which the writer has done his share), by walking the sea-floor in diving dress, or recording each square inch of the sea-bed with net and grapnel. Our boards of fisheries, the world over, are only now beginning to grasp at the immeasurable possibilities of the watery world. They toil with grab and tow-net, crowbar, pick and scalpel, camera and microscope, piecing together the fragments of a story, the half of which will never be told. Thus it will be evident that much of our so-called knowledge must be liable to constant revision and amendment. With this in mind, the writer offers the present fruits of his personal experience with every reservation. No naturalist could dare do otherwise.

* * * * *

When the ogre escaped from the suffocation of the upper air and fell back into the water, he sank until he alighted on a mound of ginger ale bottles—a silent monument to long past revelry, and now thickly encrusted with a multiplicity of ocean growths. Perched on this tumulus he looked over a stretch of country not at all unlike a terrestrial common—a piece of waste ground besprinkled with bushes two to five feet high. They were bladder weed plants, such as drape forlornly every tide-left rock. It was a prosaic sight enough, yet teeming with life to an extent which might make the Congo forests seem barren by comparison. There was not a stone or brickbat, fragment of wreckage, barrel hoop, or empty salmon tin, that was not encrusted

with a hundred extravagant forms of life. Barnacles, worm tubes, corallines, sea squirts, anemones, zoophytes without end, these covered every inch of ground. Plant was piled on plant, animal on animal, the very water was thick with tiny atoms of life, wild of shape and colouring as the inventions of some old-time goblin painter. Everywhere was an extraordinary effect of camouflage. Nothing was what it seemed. Masses of dead weed crawled slowly amongst the *débris*-concealed spider crabs, who had so draped themselves with scraps of plant and coralline as to be indistinguishable from their surroundings. Areas of mottled gravel eighteen inches square would suddenly rise from the central mass and glide heavily through the water, self-revealed as plaice and turbot who had taken on every hue and marking of the ground on which they lived. Eat and be eaten were the watchwords of that watery world. Few creatures felt so secure, by reason of their size or ability, in their seeking of shelter that they dispensed with camouflage. Small wonder that the game of life was played out with a feverish intensity.

In a world of cunning, fierce rapacity and treacherous make-believe the ogre more than held his own. As he alighted on the heaps of rubbish, the myriad pigment cells which filled his skin began mechanically to adjust themselves to counterfeit the new environment. Those arms which straggled over barnacle-encrusted bottles became on the instant at one with them in the dispersal of their whitish blotches set upon a greyish ground. One arm alighted on a water-logged copy of an evening paper, another clasped an empty petrol can. The ogre's body rested on a sheet of rusty iron. Yet you might have searched that rubbish heap for twenty minutes and still have failed to "spot" the octopus.

Suddenly he began to stride forwards. As he flung his long arms spider-like before him, he hauled himself forward and, repeating the process, progressed as fast as you or I could have walked. As he did so, a constant succession of colours raced over his leathly form, keeping exactly in tune with the nature of the ground over which he passed. He soon tired of this spider march. The open country was no place for him. Already a chance conger had passed unpleasantly close to him, and other bottom feeders, dog-fish, skate, and turbot, were stirring to life with the turn of the tide. Still intent on travelling westward,

the ogre slewed himself round and, bringing his eight arms together in a neat conical formation, began to inhale and exhale the sea-water through his siphon pipe—to breathe, in fact—with greatly increased rapidity. The effect was startling. The first “puff” raised him six feet from the sea-bed, the second sent him shooting like a torpedo through the water *backwards*. In this fashion he travelled for the next eight hours or more past Cawsand Bay and so onwards till, prompted by hunger, he sank to rest on rocky bottom off the Eddystone. Ere he reached sanctuary he ran the gauntlet of a school of porpoises, a blue shark, half a dozen hungry codling, and yet again the dreaded conger. But fortune was with him, and he squeezed his plastic body, with its eight whip-lash arms, snug within a sponge-upholstered rock fissure commanding a stretch of pebble ridge. When we consider that the ogre is but a mollusc, first cousin to the whelk and apathetic oyster, his brain capacity, lodged merely in a skull of cartilage, must appear the more amazing. He had not had a fair meal for three days. Something must be done, and he proceeded to do it. His eight arms lay around him, each coiled, watch-spring-like, upon itself. One would be sufficient for the work in hand. The rock fish, gulping prawns less than a yard from the ogre’s castle, could scarcely have chosen a worse position. One long arm unrolled itself, so quickly that only the eye of the cinema camera could possibly follow it. The fine-drawn sucker-clad tip lightly flicked the rock fish beneath its left gill cover, and, played on a living line, the fish was drawn to its death between the parrot jaws that lay at the centre of the snaky arms. An instant later, and the murderous arm deftly shot forth again, planted the dead fish on the gravel patch, and stealthily withdrew. The trap was set.

There is no place like the sea for contrasts. Some beasts win their bread by precipitation; others exaggerate precaution to a ludicrous degree. For an hour or more a green crab watched the dainty morsel; he could not pluck up the heart to seize it. “Always have something at your back,” is the crab’s first rule in life. This crab sidled backwards and forwards round three sides of the rocky walls that surrounded the gravel patch. Not till an hour had passed did he dare to brave the open. Then he advanced, and with dainty gestures proceeded to cut himself a fish luncheon. He was a pioneer.

He had shown the path; already others followed. A host of prawns, looking as though made of Venetian glass, hovered around and above the fish, and frequently settled upon it till it gleamed through their glassy shapes as though set in a block of ice. The crab, smacking out right and left as the impudent prawns endeavoured to filch from him the fragments he detached, sidled round towards the haunted rock. At one moment he was at meat, the next he stood transfixed, legs outspread, claws defiantly opened and raised, and so remained as though cast in bronze. A brown-and-emerald thong had appeared as though by magic, one end attached to the beak between the crab’s eyes, the other disappearing in the sponge-draped wall a yard away. The octopus seems to exercise over crabs something of the awful fascination which a ferret has for a rabbit, or an adder for a mouse. So, defiant of mien, yet altogether unprotesting, the crab was drawn slowly to his doom. He jammed broadside on across the narrow opening, but the whip-lash deftly turned him sideways so that he vanished from the living world for ever.

With almost monotonous precision some twenty crabs thus went to their doom within the course of the next three hours. They embraced several species, from velvet fiddlers and weed-decked sea-spiders to hermit crabs encased in whelk shells, but they went the same way, shells and all. Only the fiddlers and a small lobster offered the slightest resistance, but the end was just the same. A large lobster will often put up a four-hour battle with the octopus, but a lobster victory has never yet been registered. The ogre did not eat his victims as he caught them. He stored them one by one amidst his ample coils, and not until he deemed he had acquired sufficient, and the prawns had settled down to play undisturbed around the lacerated bait, did he bring his victims to the fore, one at a time, and, deftly disarticulating them, scoop the flesh from them with the tip of one tentacle and pass the scraps into his bird-like mouth. The empty shells were pushed out at the castle doorway, so that they presently formed an untidy kitchen midden on its threshold. Then, full fed, the ogre emerged and perched himself, distended and complacent, upon the summit of a mighty rock. His satisfaction expressed itself in a strange freak of colouring. He looked as though divided into two halves, whereof one was green, the other brick-red, after the fashion

of a jester's tunic. His leathery skin drew itself up into uncomfortable lumps and ridges that constantly changed in shape and position, playing a hideous sort of "general post." Two large horns of skin remained permanent, one over each unwinking eye, and made him look the devil that he was.

Time will not let us trace in detail his journey down the English coast that sunny August. He travelled spider-like along the bottom, shot with the speed of an arrow through the middle depths, or writhed arm over arm in a series of nightmare antics that might have chilled the hottest-blooded observer. He fed as appetite and circumstance dictated. Sometimes he excavated a dug-out for himself on gravel bottom, "blowing" the sand and gravel out with his useful siphon pipe. Or anon he would, whilst swimming, spy some toothsome crab upon the rocks below, and, spreadeagling his arms in chandelier formation, descend upon his quarry like some loathly cloud. He changed his tactics to suit each new sphere of action. One day he would calmly enter a lobster pot, clear it of its contents, and, by good fortune and unlimited plasticity, regain the open sea. Another day might find him wrestling, baffled and furious, with a securely-locked store box, maddened by the prospect of the lobsters within, and the consciousness of an empty maw within himself. Or perhaps, by good luck, he would light upon an oyster bed. What with starfishes of many kinds, and a variety of shell-bearing molluscs that pillage the beds, it is a wonder that any of the luscious shell-fish survive to reach the market. Crabs also have a way of piling silt upon the oysters until they are forced to gape in order to breathe, and then the crab's claws rob the gourmet of another tasty mouthful. And always there is the boring sponge, busily softening the shell and making it an easier prey to whelk-tingle and starfish. The octopus had his own way of opening oysters. He was too old a hand to expend time and energy in vain struggles to force the valves apart. He simply sat down beside an unsuspecting oyster and there waited, six hours, if necessary, till the shells gaped, when in a flash he inserted a pebble between them, and, the oyster gagged, dragged out the victim piecemeal at his leisure. Cockle, scallop, and whelk went the same way; but the ogre rarely condescended to eat fish, except when extreme hunger had temporarily blunted his discriminating taste.

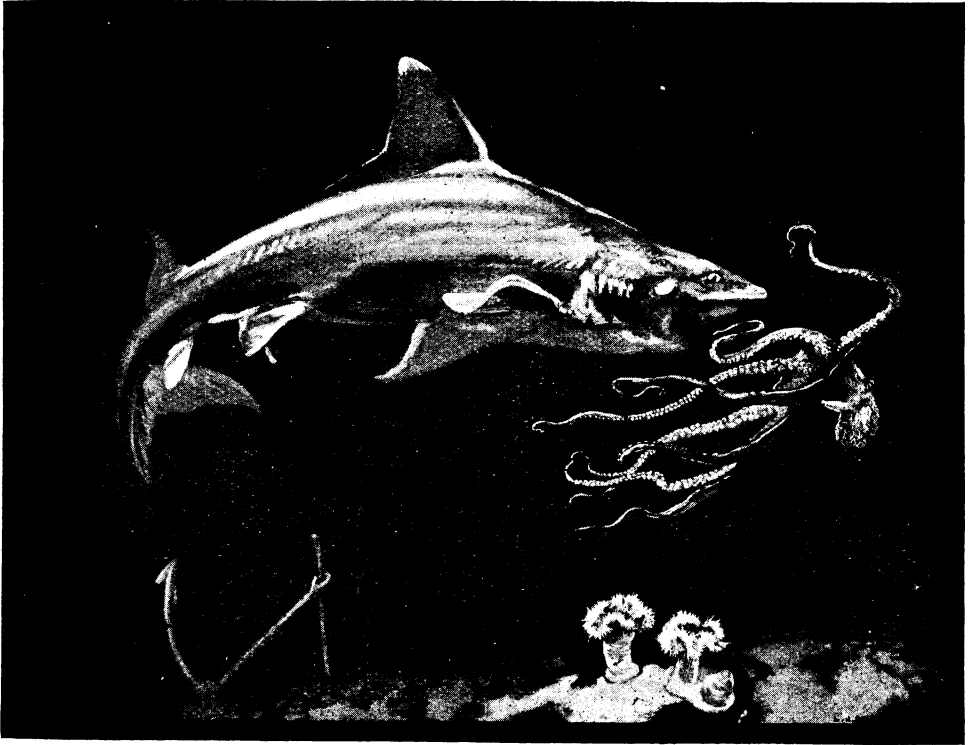
In such wise passed the long summer days and nights. Rarely coming to the surface, save occasionally to snatch at the swimming crab, which harassed the mackerel shoals, the ogre led a life of self-indulgent ease. Arrogant in his wonderful equipment for life's race, he strode roughshod, so to speak, over nine-tenths of the animals that crossed his path. But with the first hint of autumn, when the jade-green of the water darkened earlier every day, and thickened to the ground swell, a restless something began to stir within him, and would not rest until it turned him, head on, for the open sea. On a day late in the month of August he clung lightly to the edge of a submarine precipice, ten miles from the Bishop Rock. He was not the only octopus there; he was no longer conspicuous or unique—he was a unit in an army many thousands strong. We have marked the passage of the birds since time began, but the study of the sea-beasts' migrations is a comparatively recent development. Yet it is, we are beginning to realise, a matter bound by laws as unfailing as any that direct the swallows' flight. The octopods were mustering for their autumnal swim southwards. In the short warm days, and longer chilly nights that followed, their legions flung across the Channel, always swimming backward, yet pressing forward with astonishing rapidity. They often travelled near the surface, and porpoise, shark, and barracouda took toll without stint. Yet the moving mass of octopods was never sensibly diminished. Some fell to trawl and long-line, some stayed to sport a week or two around the Casquets or the Pater-Nosters and many another lonely reef. The remainder, with the day-long warmth of the Riviera in view, called for a temporary halt within the magic circle of the Channel Isles.

Jersey is not given to "octopus scares" such as this sheltered land is annually afflicted with, according to the Press, but it learns to curse the octopus most heartily. In a score of hotels and restaurants of Jersey, and along the Brittany coast, harassed proprietors explained, with many shrugs and hand waves to their disappointed patrons, that "the crab and lobster shortage so deplorable, m'sieur," was altogether to be laid at the door of the "*sacré poulpe*." They spoke the truth.

The octopus, hungry after a long-distance run, had put in at those favoured isles with a view to "stoking up" prior to his journey

south. Not only did the edible crab and lobster cease to be, but the grunting crawfish went the same way, and even the lady crab and its common green-backed cousin, tied together in "six a penny" bundles, vanished from the market stalls. The octopus himself presently took their place. The French are a thrifty nation. They are unhampered by snobbish prejudices that make an Englishman often go hungry rather than violate tradition (the stereotyped dishes he has "always been used to").

and little else. When the groaning trestle tables in the market-place could bear no more, the residue was cast upon the land, there to fertilise the earth, and, incidentally, to prick the dark night with a hundred waving will-o'-the-wisps, and make a far from favourable impression on the cultured taste in perfumery. For three weeks or more the octopus filled the public eye, even to the extent of inspiring lovelorn fisher-lads to fashion bead necklaces from the crystalline eye lenses. Then the whole



"Ere he reached sanctuary he ran the gauntlet of . . . a blue shark."

Octopus and cuttle-fish have more than once made their appearance on the suburban table, disguised (with cochineal and other matters) as tinned lobster and "best crab." Skinned and well-cooked, the flesh of the octopus is quite palatable. The Gallic folk know it. They routed octopods from their retreats at low tide with boat-hooks, twisted scraps of iron, anything that would do the work. They fished for them with net baskets filled with broken crabs, or hooked the creatures from the water as the writhing shoals passed beneath some rocky eminence. Every lobster pot was filled with the scourge,

affair passed from the sea and public interest alike. October saw the last of them as they swept southwards down the bay to choke the nets of wrathful Swansea trawlers, also bound south, chasing the hake.

The hake, one of the finest of our food fishes, is a migrant, who in winter leaves the Atlantic where it laps the west of Ireland for its warmer waters where it feeds the Mediterranean. The hake is a voracious feeder. By day he dines close to the seabed. At night he rises to scour the middle depths. Hence the hake played havoc with

the octopus wherever they might be, yet they made no appreciable difference to the writhing hoard. Thousands passed unscathed, and amongst them the individual whose fortunes we are following. From the sufficiently romantic and voluptuous beauties of the Channel bed he passed with his companions down the Bay, and so through Spanish waters into that wonderland of form and colour of which the trawl can bring us only spoonfuls of treasure and the diver stories, vague but still suggestive. Through a welter of graceful shapes and lovely colours did this creature pass, its brain, such as it was, for ever concentrated upon one issue—the gratification and satiation of an all but insatiable appetite. Romance, which beautifies the lives of beast and bird, plays but a small part in the careers of the mollusca, and is of little interest to any save the scientific investigator, and therefore need not trouble us. So, an embodiment of greed and all unwitting cruelty, the ogre, swam and crawled along the stony pavements ten miles out from Gibraltar. He lived a life of bachelor rowdiness with others of his kind. There were constant fights amongst these creatures. Food was usually the point at issue. They would steal crabs from each other as monkeys steal nuts. Back and forth robber and robbed would struggle, a shapeless bundle of squirming impotence. Occasionally one would sustain injury, then the siphon pipe came into play. Being connected not only with the creature's lungs, but also with a skinny bag filled with sepia, it would belch forth a quantity of the fluid sufficient to dye the water for many yards around. Half an hour might elapse in still water ere the cloud dispersed, and it invariably transpired that under cover of its darkness the pilferer had decamped with his stolen property. Unlike his flighty relatives the cuttle-fish and squid, who squirt forth their ink clouds on the smallest provocation, the ogre used his only under stress of bodily injury. Once having discharged this, his last resource in the hour of need, he had perforce to rest until he had regained his energy. Throughout that winter on the Mediterranean shores he used his "smoke screen" only once. That was when, resting in some eight feet of water, an arm, incautiously protruded from his rocky lair, was transfixed by a spear. A huge shadow on the anemone-studded floor had been troubling him for some half-hour or more. He might have been perturbed,

indeed, could he have known that it was caused by a boat manned by two Portuguese longshoremen, scanning the sea-bed with a glass-bottomed bucket. When the bucket revealed a sea-urchin or other market produce, there descended the spear. It descended in time to pin the ogre by an arm. The shadow on the gravel danced and shivered as the boat above plunged to the efforts of the men to unearth the ogre from his lair. More than two thousand suckers, however, were each doing their work, and one wonders what would have been the result of the duel had it not suddenly been settled by an unlooked-for arbitrator. This was a murray, one of the huge spotted eels, poisonous of tooth, that swarm in Southern waters. Seizing the free end of the pinioned arm, the great fish subjected it to a fearful revolving motion, spinning round at lightning speed till suddenly, in a welter of blood and ink, the arm broke short off, just where the spear held it. The stump shrank back like a spade-cut worm, and the murray, once beloved of gourmets in Ancient Rome, wormed away through the sparkling blue, a foot or more of his horrid feast writhing feebly from between his cruel lips. Had he caught the ogre in the open, he would have dealt similarly with each arm in turn.

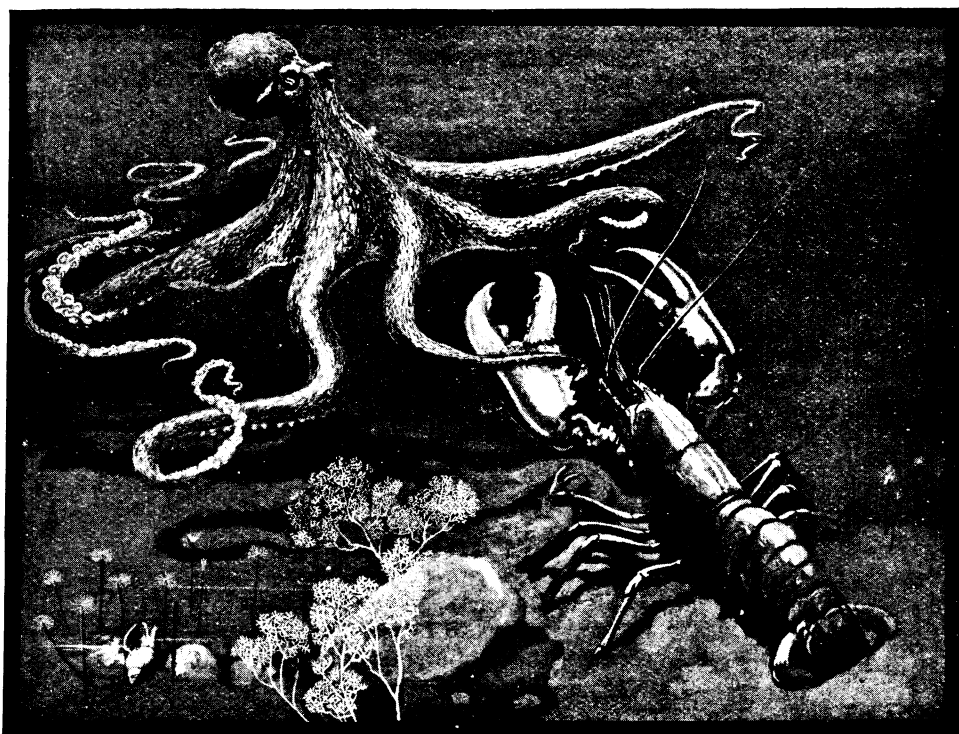
But fortune was still, for the moment, with the subject of our chronicle. He was fated to meet a far more unlooked-for end—an unwitting suicide, indeed. The following spring found him once more contemplating a protracted journey, this time northwards to our own bleak shores. He had seen, with uncomprehending eyes, many strange sights. Given a bigger brain and the gift of speech, what knotty problems might he not have solved for the makers of our fishery laws, settled with a word matters which must still wait many years of ceaseless application and unlimited midnight oil for our marine investigators even to guess at. For six months he had enjoyed a complete change of diet, for the shore crab and the lobster are almost unknown in "The Inland Sea." He had hunted and gorged upon a hundred bizarre forms of crusty life. He had even done battle with a freak octopus, whose every arm was subdivided into two or even four additional arms, each clad from root to tip with a double row of suckers. He had held a fisherman by the arm till forced to relax at the point of the gaff, not to mention seaboot and boat tiller. He had caused the death of at least one luckless bather, though, indeed, the tragedy was purely the

result of panic caused by his revolting presence. Once, near La Rove, he had been in a fair way to reach the local market. This was when a fisher-girl, with the confidence that comes of knowledge, seized him at the constriction between his head and bag-like body. That is the sure hold for an octopus. It paralysed him, causing his writhing arms to loosen their grip and curl upon themselves. Then, unluckily, his fair captor slipped upon a rock,

Whilst keeping chiefly to the sea-bed, with its ample strongholds in the form of rock

restricted menu. Could he have known, he would have been quite unmoved by the fact that each grape contained a tiny member of his own species!

It was off the Neapolitan coast and outside the trawling limit that the ogre's star began to wane. Government investigation trawlers are not hampered by any three-mile limit. The ogre was brought on deck in a tumbled bag full of coralline and clinker less than half a mile from shore. Night found him, with others of his kind, securely housed in the largest tank of the local



"Or anon he would descend upon his quarry like some loathly cloud."

crannies, the ogre occasionally sought the surface at times other than the annual migrations. Swimming thus one day, he came to rest for a moment on the under-surface of an anchored buoy. The rope for half its length was densely covered with what appeared to be bunches of heavy blue-black grapes. In idle mood the ogre flung in an arm amongst them, tore off a bunch, brought it to the mouth in the centre of the web that joined his arms, and rejected the morsel. Let us not sentimentalise over him. The grape-like clusters were rejected simply because they were not upon his rather

aquarium. For a week or more a delighted public came to gape in pleasurable horror at his eight-foot span of arm, his ever-changing colours, and his fiendish way of dealing with the daily crab ration. But though food was plentiful, he was far from reconciled to captivity. Spring! It stirred something within that shapeless head of his. What shall we call it? How draw an analogy between our human yearnings and the vague impulses, vaguer instincts, almost wholly physical, that must be at the back of all a mollusc's actions? Whatever it was it roused him to an ungovernable

restlessness. Roaming round and round his glass-walled dungeon, he came upon an object anchored to the ground, a circular object that was neither rock nor shell. Throughout the day he worried it from time to time; then, when night fell and the aquarium closed, his restless impotence soared to a climax, and he applied himself to the wrenching free of this round mystery. He brought to bear upon it that same deadly persistence that had helped him to wait patiently for several hours to gain a single oyster. With four arms clasped to the enigmatic disc, and four holding as though riveted to the rockery, he strained and strained until. . . .

Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle! The bubbles

poured upwards, a boiling stream that looked for all the world like quicksilver. Up and up they poured, and, thought the ogre, the tide had turned at last. It "turned" until he was clear of the water, and his smaller companions were cowering in the depressions at the corners of the tank. Then, with a last burst of bubbles, the tide went out, indeed, not to return for many hours, too long for any octopus to live out of water. Indeed, as the curator sadly remarked next morning: "Who would have thought that he could have wrenched the iron plug from the waste-pipe of the tank?" A mundane end, reader, for our hero, but who shall say his life had been without adventure?



APPLE HARVEST.

THESE mellow days of Autumn glow
 Take me back to Devon land.
 As through the City streets I go,
 I see instead the orchards stand
 With leaning burdened apple trees,
 While pickers tread beneath their feet
 The fallen apples as they please.
 The ripened odour, sickly sweet,
 Hangs heavy on the quiet air:
 Ruddy the cider apples lie
 Piled about the orchard there.
 Here, in the Strand, the crowds go by,
 But swift for one the bustle fades,
 Is blotted out, awhile is not,
 For streets are grassy orchard glades,
 With all their turbulence forgot.

EDITH DART.

VALERIE FRENCH

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "*Anthony Lyveden*," "*Berry and Co.*," "*Jonah and Co.*,"
"*The Brother of Daphne*," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.—The great woodland estate of Gramarye was on fire, but nobody cared, for the owner, Colonel Winchester, was in a madhouse, to which local opinion held that he had been driven by some malign influence in this wilderness of a property. The mental breakdown of Anthony Lyveden while working for him was ascribed to the same cause. From a spur of the Cotswolds a man looked down upon the holocaust, but cared no more than anyone else, for he had lost his memory. Sitting at his feet was a small dog for whose presence he could not account, and both were in the last stage of exhaustion when found and given a lift to the next village. After bestowing upon himself and the Scalyham the names of "Jonathan" and "Hamlet," in his inability to remember even his own name, Anthony Lyveden set forth to seek his fortune. About this time Lady Touchstone wrote to her kinsman, Cardinal Forest, "Poor Anthony Lyveden's body was found a fortnight ago. We had him buried at Girdle." She was referring to the search for Anthony, who had disappeared, and to the discovery of a dead body assumed to be his. She had gone abroad with her grief-stricken niece, Valerie French, who had been engaged to be married to Anthony, and at Dinard they made the acquaintance of an English girl, André Strongitharm—the *fiancée* of Colonel Winchester—who gave Valerie a profoundly moving account of Anthony's life and work at Gramarye, and of the baleful influence of the place upon his brain. A day later André was recalled to England by the news of Colonel Winchester's sudden recovery. Meantime Anthony Lyveden and his dog fell in with Sir Andrew Plaque, K.C., upon the Oxford Road, and by this chance encounter Anthony made for himself a friend indeed. Rough and hot-tempered, but kindly, the famous lawyer took a liking to "Jonathan Wood," and, when he learned that, having lost all memory of his own identity, he was beginning life again, engaged him as his secretary. André had been deeply in love with Anthony, but without awakening any response from him; now, however, that he was apparently dead, she determined to try to forget the matter and devote herself to her *fiancé*, Richard Winchester. At the latter's first meeting with her new friend, Valerie, he astounded the two girls by casually remarking that from a cab in Fleet Street he had just seen Anthony Lyveden, only to lose him again among the byways of the Temple. To the answer, "But he's dead! He's buried at Girdle," Winchester replied, "Nonsense! I'd know him anywhere. Besides, he had his dog with him—a Scalyham, with a big, black patch on his back." Then Sir Andrew met Lady Touchstone, and, after a little, Anthony and Valerie met. He did not remember her, and she would not tell him that they had been engaged, but the moment he saw her he loved her with all his heart. The next day he *recognised* André, riding alone. He remembered her and recalled distinctly that there had been something between them; but that was all. Nervously he accosted her, and from her manner and speech, no less than from the fact that she alone had waked his memory, made sure that when he disappeared he had been pledged to her. As for André, knowing nothing of his loss of memory, she read in his demeanour a declaration of love. Sir Andrew cleared the air with a heavy hand, but the mischief was done, for, when Valerie heard that Anthony had remembered André, she felt cold and shaken. And, though she presently consented to marry him when he remembered her, her yearning for his old love was so insistent that she could hardly endure any expression of the new. After a little, she took the condition back, and the two were married. But always, always it was the old Anthony's love for which the girl longed. She made no secret of this, and Anthony loved her so well that he understood and revered her longing. Man and wife though they were, between the two there stood a barrier, which only the return of his memory could do away.

X. UNTIL THE DAY BREAK.

HERE is matter, Sirs, which neither you nor I were ever intended to see—a human document, penned by a girl in her bedroom, night after night, while her husband sleeps or wakes upon the other side of the wall.

November 7th.—We were married a month ago to-day. I cannot realise it yet. I'm rather happier, because I have him all the time. But that is all—*all*. Strange, how, from childhood on, one stares at one's marriage as at an elephant, finger in mouth. The nearer it comes, the more curiously

excited one gets. Everyone tells you you're going to begin a new life; and you thank them nervously, and get all ready to be reincarnated. Your entrance into wedlock becomes a soul-shaking event. Sometimes it looms, and you're afraid. The step is invested with such tremendous, immemorial traditions that it ranks with Death itself. The Prayer Book, in fact, does the two equal honour. By the time the day is here, you fully believe you are going to be transferred to another plane—take on a new shape, or something. And then . . . nothing happens—*nothing*. You're just exactly the same. So's everything.

The momentous words have been spoken, the charm has been uttered, the wand waved, but the miracle has not come off. If you've taken a step, there's no sign of it. You've certainly changed your name, but you can do that in *The Times*. I never was so disillusioned—and relieved. At least, it reduces Death to the level of a sea voyage which one just doesn't want to take. I suppose one does take it. I daren't assume anything now. . . .

I like Cairo. Who wouldn't? It's like a dramatic version of *Æsop*, done in the stalls. You brush against fables or parables at every turn. I saw a camel to-day, its body completely hidden under its load of hay. It looked like a moving stack. It just swayed philosophically along, blinking. A man with a goat-skin of water on his back was selling it outside Shepherd's. Inside, Martinis were being mixed. As we were driving home we fell in with a funeral. Just then the traffic was stopped, and for a moment or two our eight-cylinder cabriolet marched with a trolley of professional wailers. We got in so late last night that we took it easy to-day. We went to the Bazaar and, later, to the Citadel, to see the sun go down. To-morrow . . .

Anthony remembers nothing. He knows what the places are like and tells me what to expect. Cairo, like Port Said, is familiar, but he cannot *remember* having been here before. A curious thing happened. We were wondering which on earth of the hundreds of cigarette shops sold the best cigarettes. Presently he picked out one, saying he liked its style. The moment he went inside, the people recognised him. That was the shop he had chosen when he was here before. . . . But that's not memory. If it is, it's unconscious and amounts to a glorified instinct. He can remember nothing.

With it all, he's just splendid. I hope and believe he's happy. I know I'm happy. He's a magnificent squire. . . . I'm minded to cross out those words, because, reading them over, I feel hot with shame. But I won't. I'll let them stand, and read them over every night and beg his pardon for daring to set them down. He's not a squire at all. He's the finest, most perfect lord that ever a woman had. And, to do his wretched wife honour, he's playing the squire. And she lets him . . . *lets* him. . . . It's lucky for me I live in the twentieth century. A hundred years ago I should have met with a very short shrift. I wonder

if he's asleep. If I was sure, I'd go in and put his clothes straight and look at his blessed face. But I'd better not.

November 8th.—I feel very small. So does Anthony. This morning we looked upon the face of the Pharaoh 'which knew not Joseph.' It is a hard, proud face. One understands why he was so harsh about the bricks. A live statue of the overseer of the building of the Great Pyramid was also most illuminating. With unlimited labour and that man's 'drive' behind the work, the stones simply had to go up. This afternoon we saw what that 'drive' had done. . . . We both agreed that you can't appreciate it at once: so to-morrow we move to Mena. I repeat, we feel very small. That Abraham was probably taken to see it, just as we've been taken to-day, is too big a thought for my brain. The poor thing recoils, like a puppy that has been sent to round up a mammoth. And Abraham stared upon it from much the same distance in time as we stare upon the Coliseum. . . . Such antiquity surely can put one in one's place. In its presence I feel a ragamuffin puppet, striking attitudes in a giants' council-chamber. My 'sea of troubles' sinks to an insignificant puddle: my joys, to a child's scratches in the sand. And yet . . . Cheops and Abraham and Rameses were puppets, too. They had their puddles and scratches. And when they told themselves 'It's all the same in a hundred years,' it didn't do any good. It didn't dry up their puddles. They're dry now, of course. Mine'll be dry—when I'm dead. . . . I wonder if his memory is coming back. If it isn't, what *are* we to do? What is to become of us? I can't sit down and tell him the story of our love. I can't. For one thing, it won't go into words. It was the most precious ritual that ever was used. And we never learned it. It just came natural, like instinct. How can you teach a miracle? You can't. If you do, it becomes a conjuring trick. Why do I care? Why does it matter so terribly? God knows. I suppose, because he remembered André. I suppose so. At least, it's founded on that. That started the mill. Jealousy . . . Yet I'm not jealous of her—now. The point is, what are we going to do? We might go on like this for ever, if we weren't in love. But we are, passionately. Both of us. Only I'm in love with the original, while the reproduction's in love with me. . . . At present we're drifting amicably—most amicably—in the hope of picking up a tow.

Which means that *we're going the wrong way*. Presently he'll get tired of playing the squire. He'll go to the Club . . . hunt six days a week to my three . . . work . . . And one of these days he'll go. Anthony, my Anthony will go. I'm asking for it, of course. And yet. . .

November 9th.—He is wonderful. So gentle, so easy, so natural, so handsome in all he does. Except that he doesn't call me 'Ma'am,' I might be a queen, and he my dearest equerry. He calls me 'Valerie'—never 'darling' or 'dear,' but 'Valerie' always. He just rules Sentiment right out. He gave his word, and he is determined to keep it up to the hilt. I try to make his path smooth, and my wretched efforts show what an infinitely inferior creature I am. I trip and blunder and fall over myself. He walks steadily, with bleeding feet. More. As often as I stumble and am like to pull us both down, it is he that holds me up. To-day my shoes got full of sand. He made me sit down, untied the laces, took off the shoes, emptied them and put them on again, talking evenly all the time about Andrew Plague and Patch. He was flushed and his hands were shaking, but he never touched me. Now, most unobtrusively, he avoids, when he can, the loose sand. I see it, because I'm a fool and would rush in. But he is an angel. . . . I kiss him, of course. I began without thinking and I can't give it up. I didn't one morning. He just looked at me. "Listen, Valerie. If I wanted to kiss an image, I should. I should please myself. 'Eyes have they, but they see not.' The porridge, I may add, is beneath contempt. You know. Lumpy. Still, this sea air is so imperious. . . ." He not only sinks his feelings, but he spares mine. 'Spare' ? He considers—waits upon them. He is a king who has put a slave's collar about his neck. He has tried to turn himself into an image, and he has become an idol—my blessed idol. 'He that shall humble himself shall be exalted.' And I—I suffer it. I suffer this monstrous Saturnalia to prevail. . . . I broke down to-night. We had walked to the Great Pyramid and stared at it under the moon. Coming home, I broke down—suddenly. Anthony stopped, took off his coat and spread it upon the sand. I sat down, and he sat down by my side. I put my head in his lap and cried like a child. He talked quietly, in a steady tone. "It will come back, Valerie. Don't lose heart. Together we can do anything. It will come back. . . ." After a while I put up my face

and kissed him. Cold as it was, his face was wet with sweat . . . I believe I have married a god. Yet a god would not kneel. No. I have married the finest man God ever made—whose love for me is wonderful. As we got up, I asked him, "How can you love me ?" "How can I help it ?" he said. "There's no one like you, and never has been, in all the rolling world." I could not say anything. I cannot say anything now. Such devotion, such respect for such a cause leaves me dumb.

November 10th.—I have realised that I am a married woman. I realised it to-day. We had driven to Cairo for luncheon at Shepheard's Grill. Afterwards I was sitting in the lounge, and Anthony left me to speak to a clerk at the bureau. As he was coming back, I saw a man stop him and speak. The two stood talking for a moment, and I watched them impersonally, casually, as one regards other people in a hotel. Suddenly, out of the blue, it occurred to me that one of those men was mine—my husband. . . . That tall, handsome man, with the dark hair and the cigarette in his hand, was *my husband*. . . . A thousand times I had looked on husbands and wives and thought no more of the relation than I had of their size in gloves. 'What's Hecuba to him ?' And now I was a wife : and that standing there was my husband. We were married, joined for all time. I had failed, hitherto, to see the wood, for the trees : with the result that I had almost unconsciously passed over into that state which I had always regarded so distantly, with so detached—so mild an interest. . . . I was still tingling with the excitement of realisation, when the two came across and Anthony introduced the man. They had been gunners together, so the man said. His name was Toby Redruth. He seemed very nice and delighted to see Anthony again. He said he wasn't sure of him at first—he *looked so much older*. And when Anthony looked straight at him and took no notice, he thought he was wrong. Then he became positive. . . . He was clearly swept off his feet by Anthony's loss. He couldn't get hold of it at all. His naïve bewilderment made us both laugh. It seems the last time they were together was here, at Shepheard's Hotel. And then one went East, and the other—Anthony—West. Redruth is English, but has a job in Australia. I liked him a lot, and, just as we were going, he fairly won my heart. He'd begun to recover by then. He was walking with us to the door, when he stopped and

touched Anthony upon the arm. "There's just one thing which you really ought to know. You actually saw it happen, and it's a thing that half the Army would have given their teeth to see." Then he told how a subaltern in France had got the guns away out of the very jaws of the German infantry. Anthony and I listened, spell-bound. "And I saw that with my eyes," concluded Redruth. "He ought to have had the V.C. with a couple of bars: but you know how these honours go." "Did he get *nothing*?" cried Anthony. Redruth smiled very tenderly. Then he turned to me and put out his hand. "And that," he said simply, "is why your husband was given the D.S.O." I could have kissed his honest face. But for him, I might never have known . . . never . . . what *my husband* had done. . . .

November 11th.—I have seen him. The room was full of moonlight—this wonderful Egyptian moon. I stole in, like a ghost, barefoot. I was afraid to breathe. Then, when I saw him, I forgot my fear. I didn't want to wake him, because it would have been a crime: but that was all. He looked like some picture I've seen—I can't think where. 'A Shepherd Asleep,' or something. His precious lips were parted, and there was a smile on his glorious face. His sleeve had slipped back, and his head was resting on his bare, brown arm. His hair was rumpled, and his colour was high. His coat open at the neck. He looked so young and happy . . . so free from care. . . . For a moment I couldn't grasp it, and then—I understood. He was relaxed . . . at play. The strong, resolute look had disappeared. He was a child again, a care-free child, that has no need of resolution, because the World's smiling and Life's a game. *No need of resolution.* . . . That eager, happy look cut me like a knife. It was the most terrible rebuke that ever a woman had. He must sleep to be at ease. My darling must go to sleep before he can put off care. All day he is on duty—goes armed. His eyes are always vigilant, his jaw set, his nerves taut, his soul patiently possessed. Only when sleep comes does the soldier disappear and the boy come out to play. Poor boy! Poor pit-pony, that toils so patiently day after labouring day, and never scampers in the meadows—never, save in his dreams. . . . He was dreaming, I think. I think he must have been. He looked so happy. . . .

And here I am writing now while he is dreaming. I feel dazed. I never realised that I was committing crime. I never should

have realised if I had not been in and seen the boy at play. He is a thousand times more splendid than I had ever dreamed. I have married some sylvan deity, some laughing-eyed Daphnis, who, for love of me, stamps on his springing nature, shoulders outrageous burdens he never was meant to bear, grows old and serious before his time . . . for love of me. And he does it all with such grace that I never dreamed that at heart he was just a child. Even in the old days he never looked like that. Once, yes. Once. Before Gramarye: before I sent him away. One morning, at the meet, after he knew that we were meant for each other, stand in the way what might. . . . I wonder what he was dreaming of. Golden days of some sort—blessed, breathless moments, when the blood sang in his veins and his heart danced to the tune that Life was piping . . . forgotten days and moments. . . . *Forgotten?* My God, is it possible? Is it possible that *he is remembering in his sleep?* Or was he smiling at some fantasy of an unharnessed brain? Supposing—supposing he *was* remembering. . . . Supposing that at night, when he sleeps, his memory returns . . . the fugitive, the wandering spirit comes back like a shy, wild thing stealing out of the woods to visit its empty cage . . . starting at every rustle, vanishing always at dawn. . . . I am a fool. He might have been dreaming of anything—of yesterday turned upside down, of Sir Andrew teaching Abraham to drive, of any nonsense you like, spun by some Puck out of the action of the last three months. And yet . . . I cannot forget that look upon his face. It was so happy.

I didn't kiss him. He might have waked. And I have crime enough upon my soul.

November 12th.—I am sitting, waiting, till I think it is safe to go in. . . .

To-day we rode to Sakkara and saw the Step Pyramid. It actually looks older than those at Mena. Anthony rides very well. Really, we are very happy. We settled all we shall do when we get home. First, the season. We've decided to go the whole hog—Ascot, Lord's, Hurlingham, dances, theatres night-clubs—just to find out what we like: and then, next year, we can choose. Week-ends at Bell Hammer, of course. After that, Dorset. Then abroad for a month, and back to Bell Hammer for the fall. I can't miss that two years running. Then to Dorset for hunting, with odd days and nights in Town. We shall see. . . . I told him of Gramarye



thing! You have had a time with me, Valerie. . . .” Then: “I wonder who the poor fellow was they buried instead of me. I’d like to put up a memorial when we get back—a cross or something. The pitiful dead, you know. And it might have been me easily. ‘The one shall be taken, and the other left.’” We

“Its stare had faded into a dreaming gaze, and it looked extraordinarily majestic.”

rode back in the afternoon, and the sun was going down as we got in. The desert has seasons of extraordinary beauty. Sundown is one of them. Night is another. By day it is rather too brilliant, too hard, like a frozen smile. One feels that it would smile just as brightly—has smiled just as brightly

Handwritten signature: Handwritten

to-day. All things considered, it seemed a wise thing to do. He took it quietly enough. “Winchester’s right-hand man, was I? And you couldn’t get me away? What a queer

—while men's throats were cracking with glitter. Thinking it over, I can see the cruel glint behind a lot of the *Rul'ayât*. . . .

I was right. By night his memory returns. He has been talking in his sleep—*talking of the old days*. I can hardly believe it, and I am so excited I can hardly set the facts down. I knelt by his side and heard it—heard with my ears . . . *Patch*—that's nothing, of course, because *Patch* has survived, but wait—*Gramarye*—true, I'd told him of that this morning, but wait, wait—the *Bumbles, the War, The Leather Bottel, The Dogs' Home, Me*. . . . Snatches, shreds only, but I knew where they belonged, where they came from. *He's just had distemper, sir. . . . Oak's the best. It's hard to work, but . . . Valerie, I quite forgot. The kiss I gave you that day. . . . You take the parade, Toby. . . . I couldn't help it, Patch. She—seemed—so—sweet. . . . Try and free your right arm. . . . I feel like a king, Valerie. You. . . . Colonel Winchester wants the roan at a quarter to eight. . . .* To the world, incoherent nonsense: to me, the most blessed discourse that ever a woman heard.

Two solid hours I've been there, straining my ears. Sometimes he never spoke for a quarter of an hour. Then he'd whisper something so low I could hardly hear. The scene kept changing. I never knew where he was. His memory was back at work, and his brain was stepping from incident to incident in that queer, haphazard way it does when you're letting your thoughts carry you where they will. It was back . . . in his blessed head. It flies, when he wakes, of course: but it must be very near. Perhaps . . . if in the morning he remembered a dream . . . Supposing something were to wake him—suddenly . . . when he was talking in his sleep . . . *something . . . a kiss perhaps. . . .*

November 13th.—Fate is a mocker. This morning, at breakfast, Anthony quietly said, "I had a queer dream last night." I think my heart stopped still. "I dreamed that you and I were over the edge of a cliff. And I was hanging on to the branch of a tree, holding you up. I can't remember what happened, but *Patch* was there. It was amazingly vivid." As soon as I could speak, "It wasn't a dream," I cried. "At least, not fiction. I can show you the cliff we fell over. The earth gave way while we were sitting there, and you saved both our lives." He gave me a half-frightened look. "Did I remember it, then?" "Yes, yes.

Don't you remember it *now*?" He looked away, and presently covered his eyes. I sat watching him, with my heart in my mouth. At last, "No," he said slowly, "I don't. I only remember the dream." I couldn't take that. I was frantic. I strove, I fought like a maniac to drag his memory back. I knelt by his side and made him go over the ground, inch by inch. I guided, I led, I encouraged, I pointed the way—I made a fool of myself and I badgered him. . . . Worse, I showed what a terrible value I set upon his memory and drove a desperate, hunted look into his darling eyes. . . .

I haven't the heart to write very much to-night.

I've lost heavily to-day. I never realised at the time how much I was standing to lose. I only saw the fortune I stood to win. And I didn't win, and I've lost a lot of ground. We're further apart, he and I, than we have been for weeks. The gulf that is fixed between us was losing its formidable look. It seemed to be shrinking a little in width and depth. Sweet-smelling flowers—*new memories*—were blooming about its sides, and little, tender leaves were masking its grim, raw edges. . . . This morning I tore the blossoms and leaves away. I showed him the gulf, stark and gaping and black. I forced him to face its harshness. I rammed its threat down his throat—the threat that it will never be bridged. . . .

November 14th.—A man told me once that the first time he saw the Sphinx was by moonlight, and that he had much ado not to burst into tears. Perhaps, because of this introduction, I found the Sphinx less impressive than other things. But now it is growing familiar, and familiarity is breeding regard. Its steady, imperturbable stare is beginning to attract my attention—stick in my mind. It has stared like that always. When the War came and Europe was bubbling like a pot, the Sphinx stared just as peacefully as ever. Whilst Anthony and I were hanging over that cliff, with Death whispering in our ears and the birds screaming below, the Sphinx was here, staring steadily into the distance. While men were hauling the Wooden Horse into Troy, the Sphinx was staring placidly across the ages. It will stare like that upon the Day of Judgment. At what is it staring so fixedly? What has it seen so fascinating that holds its eyes for ever? Eternity, perhaps. Thousands of years ago it saw Eternity coming, and it has never shifted its gaze. . . . I am coming to like the Sphinx.

It is not fenced with awe, like its companions. Venerable as it is, it doesn't make me feel small. I think, if it could talk, it would be very civil. I am not sure that it has not a sense of humour.

Anthony certainly has. But, then, my husband is a wonderful man. To-day, by sheer force of will, he has won back for us both all the ground that I lost yesterday morning. He made me race my pony against his: he told me stories of Andrew Plague and Patch: he pictured the dismay of the Magicians in Ordinary upon finding that the enchantment for making lice was not in their books. With it all, he never grated. "The art of life, Valerie, is to bear up. We'll lunch in Cairo and drink such a cup as Jamshyd never dreamed of. Afterwards we'll go and be stung in the Muski. We'll give a thief-treat. You know. Apparently aged rugs. There's nothing like spending money to buck you up. Hang it, we've much to be thankful for. There's you and there's me, and there mightn't be either. And what about Hamlet Patch? Supposing my name had been 'Buggins' You just couldn't 've married me. To become 'Mrs. Albert Buggins' would have been too thick. And people would have said, 'There go the Bugginses.'" I had to laugh. . . . The tambourine was rolling: he kept it rolling magically. We tore back to Mena in the evening, along that long, straight road, chattering like two children . . .

After dinner we visited the Sphinx. I am beginning to perceive its mystery. Standing before it, you feel that you are in a presence—the presence of something immeasurably wiser than you. I know it is only a graven image, but I cannot help that. The feeling is not to be denied. And though the Something is wiser, it is not less human. I am sure the Sphinx would be very decent.

I wonder what it costs him to do what he did to-day. I wonder what it cost Daphnis to laugh and dance and sing with a heavy heart. A week or two more of this, and the boy will disappear. I shall have broken his heart. Only the tired soldier will be left. . . . A time must come when the pit-pony dreams no more of the green meadows and the kiss of the cool grass upon his aching heels. What happens to people who rob a pit-pony of his dreams? Surely 'it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck. . . .' *I am afraid.* My God, I am afraid to go in—in case that happy look shall have disappeared. And this boy, whose happy heart I am breaking, is *my*

beloved. The little one I am offending is *my darling Anthony.* . . .

I cannot sleep. How can any murderess? I am going to dress and go out . . . to see the Sphinx.

November 15th.—A strange thing happened last night. I went out alone, about eleven o'clock, and walked to the Sphinx. Its stare had faded into a dreaming gaze, and it looked extraordinarily majestic. The fanatics who tried to spoil it lost their labour. All they did was to give it a chance of demonstrating that it is above battery. You cannot disfigure personality. I found it almost impossible to remember that it was only an image. The impression of humanity was ridiculously strong. I found myself wishing idiotically that it could speak. I don't know why. I had no questions to ask. But I felt intuitively that, if it spoke, its words would be worth hearing. All of a sudden it occurred to me that *the man who lay buried at Girdle was Peter Every.* Girdle was miles from my thoughts. For no reason whatever, the idea just burst into my brain, and the moment it occurred to me I knew it was true. Its truth was manifest—glaring. Peter was last seen at Girdle. He had been at Gramarye for me. The world had been scoured for news of him in vain. More. Everybody would have known that the body was his, if everyone hadn't been certain that it was Anthony's. As it was . . . Poor, poor Peter. Somehow—in some shocking way, he had met his death *in my service.* Instantly the thought flashed that *it wasn't my fault.* I fobbed it off. It returned forcibly. I *knew* that I wasn't to blame. I *knew* . . . I felt that, for some mysterious reason, Peter was not to be mourned . . . that he had been devoted—dedicate . . .

I went back to the hotel in a dream, turning my secret over and wondering whence it came. Was it coincidence? Or had the Sphinx twitched the scales from my eyes? Perhaps they just fell. Still, I imagine, if you sit at the feet of Wisdom. . . .

This morning the Sphinx was staring as fixedly as ever.

I have said nothing to Anthony, but I am going again to-night . . . to sit at its feet. I am so impatient to get there that I am going now.

* * * * *

There. We have looked over Beauty's shoulder long enough, down past the bloom on her cheek and her sweet-smelling hair. Besides, my lady must change her slippers

for something less exquisite: she cannot go walking the desert in those little dancing shoes. Satin and sand will not agree together. She must choose a coat, too, out of her wardrobe, for the breath of winter is stealing into the almanac, emerging like a grey wolf, after the great sun has run his course. And though I should like to squire her with all my heart, I cannot afford the time. Besides, it is not my place. Wherefore come with me, Sirs, into her lord's chamber and see how he is faring, while Valerie puts off her slippers and chooses a coat.

* * * * *

Leaning against a jamb of his bedroom window, Lyveden looked out into the night. This was luminous. The moon was not up, but the brilliant stars were issuing a definite radiance, which lightened the darkness mystically. It would have been strange if the clusters with which the heaven was laden had not asserted themselves. By some trick of atmosphere, they seemed monstrously low and lambent, ten times as innumerable numerous as ever before. Indeed, in places the violet dome from which they appeared to depend was almost blotted out—there, to the right, a thousand million acres of the firmament were lacquered with a sea of silver-gilded worlds, all fretting and shimmering and rolling to Eternity's will.

For a while the man stood, smoking, contemplating his lot.

He was, of course, immensely proud of his wife. To be known for the lord of such a dazzling creature was a delicious vanity. So often as he considered that they were man and wife, his heart glowed. When he saw her coming to him in a public place, the cynosure of eyes, the thought that she was his lady, that that glorious smile was for him, that he had the right to rise and declare their relation, exhilarated him wildly. When chance acquaintances commended her by word or deed, he flushed with delight. He was also as deep in love as a man may be. He found her kind as she was fair, most loving and, most of all, natural. The easy, unconscious friendliness of a child, the quiet, steady understanding of a twin, the fresh, eager *bien être* of a wild creature—*tria juncta in uno*, made her most worshipful. Here was a wise head, of singular beauty, upon shoulders which were not only young, but white, shapely, supple, fit for the back of Artemis. Valerie could run like a deer. She could also enter a restaurant and stand waiting for a table to fall vacant with as much pleasing unconcern as most people

use in Church during the singing of a Psalm. She could so decline a proposal that the man who had made it felt idiotically rich. With it all, the pride of her turned everything she touched to gold. Swains, servants, strangers—all everyone was conscious of her dignity, except herself.

Anthony knew that he was a most fortunate man . . . most fortunate . . . blessed. . . . And yet—what had he of Valerie that Toby Redruth might not have had, had he but stayed in Egypt? Her love, indubitably. For him, the easy friendliness crept closer, the quiet understanding beat more tenderly than for other men. He had his lady's love—a jewel fit for a god's treasury. The trouble was that Anthony was not a god. . . .

Man is a hunter, first of all.

The friendliness glowed like a fire on a snowy night. The hunter warmed himself luxuriously.

The understanding was straight out of heaven. The hunter doffed his cap and thanked God.

But the wild thing was yet in the forest, shy, spirited, waiting. . . . A distant, yearning look slid into the hunter's eyes.

With a sigh, the man turned from the pageant and, after looking listlessly about the room, took his pipe from his mouth and frowned upon the bowl.

Then he sat down at a table and, taking up a letter, proceeded to read it over before he answered it.

45, Kensington Palace Gardens, W.

DEAR LYVEDEN,

I am obliged for your letter, addressed to me from Rome. I think it improbable that I shall visit that city. The relics of an admirable efficiency, lying beside those of the vile immoderation which eventually broke its back, must be a melancholy spectacle. In this connection, I was not engaged by your somewhat sickly rhapsody upon the Coliseum, which, after all, was nothing but an abattoir capable of accommodating several frightened brutes and some eighty thousand idle ones.

Which makes me conscious of a beam in my eye.

I do not work as I did. I have tasted the blood of leisure. Besides, Lady Touchstone makes lawful demands upon my time—demands which I delight to respect. Consequently, I now go to Chambers but five days in the week, and no work is sent to the house.

Our marriage will be solemnised towards the end of next month, when we shall leave for the South of France—a movement which

I regard with some uneasiness. Except for a visit, paid many years ago, to Boulogne, I have never before left Great Britain, but the memories of that hideous excursion still provoke my indignation. I found the French, if possible, more brainless than my own countrymen. Almost as soon as I had landed, I had the maddening privilege of watching my portmanteau, first, so placed in a luggage-net that it must inevitably fall out and then fall out into the strip of water separating the ship from the quay. By way of consolation, it was presently explained to me that this was a frequent occurrence. My letter reserving rooms at the hotel had been ignored, and, since the town was inexplicably crowded, I had the greatest difficulty in procuring a lodging. I was continually embarrassed by the unaccountable inability of such of the inhabitants as I was compelled to address to comprehend their own tongue, while the imbecility, vanity and impertinence of the manners and customs to which I was expected to subscribe made my gorge rise. Lady Touchstone, however, assures me that all this is changed, and that Nice is a pleasant place, where English is freely spoken and English habits have superseded French practices.

On our return to England we shall reside here for a while. I have asked Lady Touchstone to indicate what alterations she desires, but, except for the decoration of her rooms, she will hear of none being made. She will bring two bed-women, and the other servants will remain.

The dog is in excellent health.

It is right that you should know that a few days ago he was seized with a sudden sickness in the library. I regret to say that the manners of the first veterinary surgeon who arrived left much to be desired. I therefore ordered his removal and sent for another. The second at least condescended to sell me such skill as he possessed. The dog's temperature was taken and found to be normal, when the surgeon declared that his seizure was probably due to a passing indigestion, due in its turn to eating too fast. The fact that he has appeared perfectly well ever since corroborates this diagnosis. However, I have arranged for the man to call every morning, until further notice, to see that the dog is in health, for, as you know, my opinion regarding his physical condition is of no value.

He is bathed once a week under my supervision. I fear he dislikes this, for his demeanour is dejected, and he frequently attempts to leave the bath during the operation. Upon being lifted out, however, his spirits

immediately revive, and by the time he has been dried, his exuberance is conspicuous.

I shall be glad to see you again. I do very well without you, but I had, I suppose, contracted the habit of reserving for your ears matters which I wished to discuss, and so I notice your absence. Possibly, in the future, if our wives continue to agree, we may conveniently see something of one another.

I heard from Forest yesterday, promising to attend our wedding and speaking highly of you and of his niece. I would do much for that man, who does much to redeem for me the painful impression created by certain other divines.

I hope that you are well and do not regret what you have done. There is nothing which I can usefully say of your predicament, so I shall hold my peace. Lady Touchstone and I speak frequently of you both and wish you very well.

Should you write to me from Egypt, I beg that you will not dilate upon the Pyramids, which, though commonly accounted one of the wonders of the world, only commemorate the blockish mentality of the scene-shifters who ordered their construction. They are not decorative and serve no purpose. Their erection certainly entailed more labour, blood and tears than any building that ever was set up, and they are probably the most idiotically useless things that ever cumbered the earth.

Give my regards to Mrs. Lyveden.

Faithfully yours,

ANDREW PLAGUE.

Lyveden picked up a pen and made ready to write.

His thoughts, however, were mutinous.

After a minute or two he rose and crossed to the window to knock out his pipe.

As he leaned over the sill, Valerie passed out of the hotel—a delicate, dark-haired ghost, silent, fleeting.

For an instant the man stood still, taken and held by surprise. The next moment he was fighting his way into a pair of tennis-shoes. . . .

That Valerie should be abroad, unattended, by night, was not to be thought of. Plainly she wished to be alone. He would respect her desire. She should go and do as she pleased. But, though she should not know it, the squire would be within call. It was his job.

In a flash he was downstairs and out in the sable road.

There he stood, hatless, peering into the shadows, straining his eyes and ears, to know which way she had gone.

The sons of Nature seemed to have conspired to thwart his senses. The silence, which she had shaken, lay still as death. The jewellery of heaven was shedding a lesser light. A wandering breeze lisped to smother her footfalls.

Then, fifty paces away, something flickered against the black of the way . . . something . . .

A moment later Lyveden was following a pale figure, steadily flitting into the wilderness.

That the figure was that of an Egyptian, and not that of his wife, rather naturally never entered his head. Both were dark-headed, grey-clad, spectral. But this was of no consequence. The Egyptian was following the lady.

The three proceeded Sphinxward, Valerie setting the pace—blind leading the blind . . .

The girl was curiously excited. Mystery was in the air. She was persuaded that, naturally or unnaturally, in the presence of the Sphinx the field of her intelligence expanded and its focus became more sharp.

It is probable that her persuasion was sound. There was, to my mind, no mystery. Plainly the monument inspired her. Her identification of the dead the night before was an inspiration.

It was, however, most natural that the girl should smell magic. Others wiser than she have done so with less excuse. Darkness, silence, the wilderness, tradition, an age so old as passeth all understanding—if such a pasture will not draw Magic, then will no pasture. Be that as it may, the magic she smelled made her the more receptive. By the time she had sighted the Sphinx, Valerie was quite prepared to be among the prophets.

The Egyptian's emotions were at once less fine and more hazy.

Perceiving a white woman passing alone into desert places, he had followed her of instinct. Here was something superior to and feebler than himself, an opportunity to overpower which with impunity was being offered him. Not to avail himself of such an invitation would have been grotesque. His forbears would have turned in their graves. He had no intent save violence, no plan of action save surprise. Instinct was his conductor, and instinct would tell him what to do.

The beast was evil and would have been hanged long ago, but for the love he bore his own skin—an inconvenient affection

which had spoiled more sport than he could remember. To-night, however, he could junket without a qualm. Retribution was asleep. The mists of robbery and murder wreathed themselves glittering before his protruding eyes. Gliding behind his quarry, he began to feel extraordinarily brave. It was only with an effort that he mastered an inclination to expectorate contemptuously.

Anthony went thoughtfully, his eyes riveted upon the splash of grey ahead. He was sure, of course, that Valerie was for the Sphinx. He feared that she was unhappy . . . was sleeping ill. He wondered if she had ever gone out by night before, decided that she probably had, sweated to think of the perils she had invited. The reflection that now all danger was overpast, he found most comfortable. The thought that she would never be aware of his vigilance, that night after night, perhaps, she would go forth, unconscious alike of peril and wardship, that his darling would be under his government, though his darling would never know, gave him an exhilarating sense of seigniority—a feeling not to be found in the prescribed equipment of squires. He kept his distance carefully, with a grateful heart.

That upon her beholding the Sphinx and presently contemplating the monster as dispassionately as she could, nothing which could, by any stretch of imagination, be construed as a revelation, was vouchsafed to Valerie, is not surprising. Divers commonplace thoughts wandered casually into her head—to be pounced upon, sifted and scrutinised in vain. Here was no gold. Presently, naturally enough, she thought of what had happened the night before—as luck would have it, a fatal exercise. Her mind fell upon the memory and refused to let go. She hauled it away and drove it elsewhere. Always it eluded her goad and came pelting back. To see what would happen, she allowed it to have its way. It swallowed the memory whole, and then settled comfortably down to chew the cud. . . .

A feeling of disappointment began to edge its way into Valerie's heart. Apparently the oracle was not to work to-night. After all, it could not be expected to function regularly. Still, she had hoped—felt. . . .

She did not know what she had hoped. There was no communication which she at all desired. That which had been made her the night before she did not especially value. It was, after all, of no use. Still. . . .

She had a ridiculous feeling that the

Sphinx was interested. To-morrow, perhaps. . . .

Valerie rose to her feet.

The moon would be rising soon. Very soon the gentle fuller of the firmament would be about her business. Any moment now her exquisite craft would come stealing over the desert, slashing Night's doublet with silver, furbishing a dull world.

Her thoughts slid back to a night a year ago, when she had stood, as now, looking upon a landscape which was smiling in its sleep: on the terrace . . . at home . . . at Bell Hammer . . . with Anthony by her side. . . . And he had wrapped his love in a fairy tale—a tale of a frog and a princess. The princess had kissed the frog, because—'because it pleased her to kiss him,' and—nothing had happened. The frog had loved her so much and had hoped so very hard, and then—nothing had happened. Poor frog. . . .

With a sigh, the girl turned, to meet the Egyptian face to face.

She started violently and then stood still as death.

The look in the creature's eyes was blazoning the intent to kill. There was no hope.

In a flash her folly stood out in all its nakedness.

She must have been out of her mind to leave the hotel. Even in England it would have been unwise. In Egypt. . . . She must have been mad . . . bewitched. Her wretched, idiot fancy that the Sphinx had power to—*Power?* My God! *This was its power . . . this. . . .*

How clear it was now! How simple! 'Those whom the gods will destroy they first send mad.' She had asked to be shown the mystery, and her prayer had been heard. She had sat at the feet of the Sphinx, and the Sphinx had shown her the way to dig her own grave. She thought herself so clever because she had found its secret—counted herself one of the elect because she had felt its spell . . . and all the time the Sphinx was luring her on . . . all the time she was strutting up to her doom.

And now the comedy was over—all but the last short scene. And Anthony, in whose presence every hair of her head was safe, was sleeping peacefully . . . with a happy look on his face. . . .

She wondered dully whether the Sphinx ever smiled.

Surely, if ever it did, it was smiling now

. . . leering and staring, as this thing before her was leering and staring horribly.

Valerie felt very sick suddenly.

The Egyptian began to mow and gibber in an ecstasy of hate. . . . A filthy breath beat upon her face. . . . Instinctively the girl shrank. Instantly a hand like a clumsy claw fell shaking upon her shoulder. . . .

It was at this moment that Anthony took her assailant by the throat.

To be exact, he took him by the sides of the neck, standing directly behind him, with his thumbs braced against his backbone and his powerful fingers pressing upon his windpipe. For a first attempt at garroting, it was extremely good.

The Egyptian fought like a beast that will stave off death, without the slightest result. The inexorable grip grew slowly tighter and tighter. The pain in his spine became an agony, which no manner of screams could express. What was so frightful was that he could not scream—because he could not breathe. The pressure upon his windpipe was preventing him. Here he perceived that it was necessary that he should fill his lungs. It had been necessary for a long, long time. It was becoming vital—*vital*. He must breathe, instantly—or die. His head was bursting, like a skin that is stretched too tight. The blood was heaving, pounding against the back of his eyes. His lungs were delivering an ultimatum. The agony in his spine was not consistent with life. Something warm was running out of his ears. The inside of his head had fetched loose and was flapping like canvas in the wind, and the wind was roaring. The stars had slipped and were rushing earthward in a mad swirl. . . .

Anthony, who had always understood that compression of the windpipe induced insensibility, was beginning to wonder whether Egyptians were abnormally built, when his victim's knees sagged and he collapsed upon the sand.

Anthony stepped over the body and up to Valerie's side.

The girl stared at the huddle with frightened eyes.

"Dead?" she whispered.

Anthony shook his head.

"To-morrow," he said, "Douglas will have a stiff neck. Possibly his throat will be sore. And, if he identifies me, he'll want to enter my service at a nominal wage. But I don't think we'll have him."

Valerie tried to laugh and burst into tears. . . .

As they were nearing the hotel—

"You do everything well," she said.

"Even violence?"

"Yes, everything. You always did. Gods do, I suppose."

"Valerie, Valerie!"

The girl turned and caught him by the arm.

"I take it back," she said. "You're not a god. If you were, you wouldn't love me. That's your only fault. That you can waste your time on a—— No. Don't stop me, lad. I want you to know how I feel. I want you to know that I realise that we're playing parts—that I'm playing the part of a queen in a pasteboard crown, while you're playing the part of my *man*, to do me pleasure. You're my lord, really. You know you are. But if you don't know it, I do. The first time I ever saw you, you were my lord. The royalty in you just crooked its finger, and I had to come. I masked it as best I could, because I'm a woman. But I had to come. . . . I'd seen you, and that was enough. I was your slave." She lifted her eyes and looked at the rising moon. "So I am now. It is my glory. . . . I lost my balance once, and trod it under my feet. I might as well have kicked against a marble wall. I was your slave. . . . How d'you think a slave feels when her lord makes much of her? I'll tell you. It makes her very happy and very proud, and it turns her love into an adoration. But how d'you think a slave feels when her lord kneels at her feet . . . humbles himself to do her honour . . . gives up his titles and estate? I'll tell you, because I know. She feels as though her heart would break, Anthony . . . and sometimes she wishes to God that they had never met. . . ."

There was a long silence.

At length the girl sighed and lowered her eyes. The cold, searching wind of self-reproach had died down. When she spoke again, the wild note in her voice had become wistful.

"I don't know why I keep thinking of old times to-night. But you and I stood like this once, together . . . one perfect night . . . my birthday, a year ago. You told me a fairy tale . . . a tale of a frog, poor fellow, who was in love with a princess. . . ."

"I take it, I was the frog," said Anthony.

"That's right. And he thought that, if the princess were to kiss him, he'd turn into a prince."

"That wasn't very original," said

Anthony. "The idea of Beauty bracing herself to kiss a repulsive Beast has almost the standing of a proverb."

As he spoke the words, the girl's brain plunged.

Beauty bracing herself. . . .

The cap fitted. It was her very plight.

The curious persistence with which the fairy tale had thrust into her mind was suddenly explained, its moral immeasurably reinforced. The Sphinx—the oracle had spoken just as the night before—— It occurred to Valerie that she had done the creature wrong. The evil that had befallen her was not its fault. Besides, no evil had befallen her. She had been miraculously preserved. . . . Indubitably she had been right. Her first impression had been right. The Sphinx *was* interested. *And—it—had—pointed—her—the way. . . .*

Anthony was speaking—from a great way off. His voice was sounding ridiculously minute.

"What happened?" he was saying. "Did the princess eventually kiss him?"

"Yes," said Valerie faintly. "And—and he turned into a prince."

* * * * *

An hour had gone by—the happiest hour that Anthony had ever known.

Fearful lest her recent experience should prey upon her mind, the man had laid himself out, cost what it might, to lift up his lady's heart. He had his reward. Before he knew where he was, her heart had caught his and lifted it clean into Paradise.

The two sat in her room, talking familiarly of bygone days. He could not remember them. *It did not matter.* She made him free of her memory, invited his curiosity, rallied his eagerness.

For the first time since their compact, they had exchanged rôles. The man was natural, and the woman was playing a part. Valerie was pretending that she did not care. . . .

Perched sideways upon a table, the slim white fingers of one hand resting upon her hip, those of the other keeping a cigarette, her back straight as an arrow, the girl was a sight to make the angels shout. Every precious bit of her was remembering Nature. The sun and the rain might have dressed her wonderful hair, berries have bled the scarlet of her mouth, violets and stars con-jured the magic of her eyes. Her voice was birds' music; the smell of her, the faint scent of blossoms upon a summer's night.

Fresh, lithe, glowing, she was embodying most exquisitely that very nonesuch of quality, that precious offset to decay, seldom of this world, never of any other, red, quivering Vitality itself. The spring of her movement, the course of the blood in her veins, the clean breath of her body—these unseen mysteries were patent as the day. The wild thing was out of the forest: Eve was in Eden.

Sitting there, on the table,



"Before her horrified gaze the quiet, resolute mien stole into place."

passing now and again to shudder over a sip of brandy and soda—medicine which he had prescribed—Valerie gave the impression of a wild thing that knew no fear. Once she burst into song—flung out a snatch of a lullaby which he had used to love.

Little wonder that, looking upon her, the man's heart burned within him. The queen had put off her crown.

If the queen had put off her crown, the soldier was not upon parade.

Seated on the arm of a chair, his pipe between his white teeth, Anthony Lyveden was looking like a young god, refreshed—some god of the woods and streams whom a man might take for a shepherd of high degree. The light of laughter hung in his fine grey eyes. His firm well-shaped mouth had taken a happy curve. The eager tilt of his chin, his heightened colour, the fresh brilliance of his tone, told that the porter had laid aside his pack. Care had slipped down from his pillion. The pony was out of the pit.

Valerie saw this, and the sight gladdened her eyes. She began to forget that she was playing a part. Pretence slid into Reality. If Reason flung out an arm, Nature brushed it aside. That blessed, happy look was worth anything—*anything*. Besides, she—*she did not care . . . any more*. At least. . . How *could* she care, when the boy had come out to play? At the thought that it was she who had coaxed him, a smile of unfutterable tenderness swept into her face. . . .

Anthony saw it and, smiling, praised God.

An overwhelming desire to do more came flooding into Valerie's heart. Before his excellence, words failed her. She felt inarticulate. Yet, express herself somehow, she must. She must make him realise how incredibly dear he was. Her king had no idea—no conception how much he meant. The impulse to open his eyes became irresistible. Her ecstasy, his merit simply had to be expressed.

Valerie slipped off the table, fell on her knees, and put her arms round his neck. . . .

Instantly the happy look faded.

Before her horrified gaze the quiet, resolute mien stole into place.

In a flash the boy was gone, and the soldier was on parade.

The strain had come back.

For a second the girl peered at him, wide-eyed, speechless with dismay.

Then the dam burst, and her heart lifted up its voice.

"Anthony! Don't go back! My sweet, my darling, don't be on guard any more! I've seen you relaxed, my precious, I've seen you relaxed. I've seen you at ease—off duty, and I can't let you go. I never knew—never realised what it meant to you, and I hadn't the faintest notion of what it meant to me. It means everything, Anthony—everything in the world. What's your memory to me? *Nothing!* D'you hear? D'you understand? *Nothing!* I think I must have been mad to want it back. It's you I want, my darling, you, you, *you!* When I see you happy like that, I simply don't care. I couldn't care if your memory never came back. The present's so dazzling that the past pales by its side—fades into insignificance. All these wretched weeks I've wrestled and fought with a shadow—a rotten ghost. And because you've loved me with a love I don't deserve, you've wrestled and fought, too. And now the ghost's laid. Smashed—broken for ever. It can't ever rise again. I don't know whether to laugh or cry when I see what a fool I've been. And you must try and forgive me, darling lad. They say Love's blind, and that's been the trouble with me. But now I can see. You've shown me. You've come off duty and shown me your blessed self. Oh, Anthony, Anthony, smile as you did just now. Look into my eyes and smile. Show me you know it's true that your memory doesn't count. Don't think I'm acting. I'm not. I mean what I say. If I were acting, how could I talk like this? I tell you, it doesn't count, darling. It'll never count any more. I don't care what you remember or what you forget. If you want to make me happy, do as I say. Smile—look—be as you were just now. Remember the barrier's gone, and that you and I are together, overlooking the rolling world. Look back at the last half-hour and see how happy I've been. I broke into song just now. Why d'you think I did that? Because I just had to sing—out of pure joy. Does that look as if I was caring about your memory? Oh, Anthony, my darling, my heart, blot out the last two months, and start again. Forget that they've ever been—except the last half-hour. Not that you haven't been wonderful, because you have. You've played the squire as it's never been played before. But now you've spoiled it all and shown me the king . . . my king . . . my glorious, happy boy, with a crown

on his head and a look in his blessed eyes that I can't do without, my darling . . . that *I can't do without any more.*"

Breathless, trembling, she stopped—with her heart in her mouth.

The resolute look was fading. The boy—the boy was coming . . . coming back . . . tentatively . . . venturing out to play.

Spellbound, she watched the wonder steal into his eyes.

Hardly daring to breathe, she watched him trying to realise that his dream was true.

The thing seemed too big for him.

A half-perplexed, half-frightened look displaced the wonder. . . . He put a hand to his head. . . . Then the wonder returned, stronger and clearer than before. The boy was beginning to smile. . . . Little by little that blessed happy look was coming back. . . .

Suddenly he seemed to hesitate.

Then, very gently, he put up a boyish hand and touched her hair.

Valerie thrilled to her core. . . .

Again, for a moment, he hesitated.

Then, with a shy smile, he began to take out the pins. . . .

Valerie could have burst into tears of pure joy. Her cup was full. She had beaten the fairy tale. The frog had become a prince.

With a leaping heart, she bowed her beautiful head and suffered his gentle fingers. . . .

When her glorious hair was all loosened, Valerie lifted her head and shook her fragrant treasure about her shoulders.

The boy gazed at it with rapture: the king was beholding his kingdom: the hunter was on his knees.

"I always wanted to see it down," he whispered, "always. The first time I ever saw you—in the door of *The Leather Bottel*, you had no hat on. I remember thinking then how much I'd love to see it tumbled about your shoulders. . . . And now my dream's come true."

His eyes turned from the glory to meet his wife's.

Valerie was staring at him with parted lips.

The light in her wonderful eyes was supernatural.

Anthony started.

"What is it, Valerie? What have I said? What——?"

He stopped short and clapped a hand to his mouth. . . .

Presently he stood up and lifted her to her feet.

With his arms about her, he smiled into her eyes.

"For you shall find it," he whispered, "after many days."

In the next number will be published a long complete story by

DORNFORD YATES

in which, under the title

"THREE'S COMPANY,"

the author returns to the comedy manner of his highly successful work now known in book form as "*Berry and Co.*," "*Jonah and Co.*," "*The Courts of Idleness*," and "*The Brother of Daphne*." A new set of characters presented in "*Three's Company*" will be found to be as vividly modern and attractive as those which won and maintain a world-wide popularity for the earlier stories.



"Lily drew up to the table and partook of a large plain meal in a small pretty manner."

THE FIFTH QUARTER

By PAULA HUDD

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

MRS. CARTER let herself in with a large, long latchkey—a clumsy, ugly latchkey possessing no line. Neither did the house to which it gave access possess line, but some inward beauty revealed itself in the gallant little geranium on the second-floor window-sill, bravely waving its scarlet banner amid the flying dust and soot, and in the shiny-leaved aspidistra that graced the tight-shut bay window with still stateliness.

It was Mrs. Carter who closed the window and saw to it that the aspidistra was shiny, but it was Mrs. Carter's daughter who opened the window and put a little red geranium to bloom amid the smuts.

Mrs. Carter shut the door and replaced the ugly key in her black leather purse,

where it bulged against a perilously thin patch of leather. Then she went down the passage to the kitchen, walking quickly with short, pattering steps in the manner peculiar to all rather stout people possessed of little feet and big hearts.

Arrived in the kitchen, she found the ironing cloth on the table, with one of Lily's crêpe-de-chine blouses rolled up near by. A flat-iron was heating on the top of the gas cooker in the scullery.

Mrs. Carter put her purse down on the mantelshelf, and, without removing the black plush coat that she wore summer and winter, she set to work to iron Lily's blouse. The task made her hot, and she pushed back the dusty black hat with the limp red rose nodding over its brim. One end of her

tightly-twisted but still abundant brown hair escaped from the pins, and her plump face, with its bright brown eyes and button mouth, grew red and shiny.

There was the sound of someone humming and fox-trotting along the linoleum-covered passage, and Lily came into the kitchen, cool, slim, and amazingly fair.

"Ma, you shouldn't, darling!" The sweet, unhurried tones held a slight affectation which barely hid their natural Cockney accent. "Why don't you take your coat off? You look dreadfully hot."

Mrs. Carter screwed up her mouth and snapped her eyes. "Is me Greshun nose shiny, dearie? I never was no oil painting, but you've got me to thank for yer pretty nose." She banged the iron down on the rest. "Not going out with Mr. Burnham to-night, ducky?"

She felt she would never be able to say "Harry." Lily might wear his ring—a glorious half-hoop—on the third finger of her left hand, but he was the junior partner of Coles and Airlie, and how should a common charwoman bring herself to speak of him as Harry?

Up to a few days before Lily had served behind one of the counters of Messrs. Coles and Airlie's emporium, and to Mrs. Carter the junior partner of her daughter's employers would always be "Mr. Burnham."

"No, he felt tired," Lily explained, "so he's gone home to have an early night."

Mrs. Carter finished the blouse, then removed her dusty hat and her plush coat, and unpinned the apron that it had concealed.

"Well, why don't you take the chance and go to the pictures?" she said, rolling up the ironing blanket and spreading a cloth on the table. "Just have a bit of something to eat, and you'll be in good time to see the long picture. They've got 'The Dance of Life' on this week. Even if Mr. Burnham don't like the pictures, he can't object to you goin' by yerself."

She put some cold meat and cheese and a large fruit tart on the table, while Lily sat pensively by the window.

"I can't think 'ow you can bring yourself to marry a man who won't go to the pictures, ducky. It'll be as bad as 'avin' a vegetarian or a pussyfoot for a husband."

Lily raised calm blue eyes. "You've got a bit of hair sticking out, darling," she said gently. "Will you come to the pictures with me?"

Mrs. Carter wilted a little under the snub.

"No, I think I'll have a bit of a sit down. Me feet ache shocking." She twisted the unruly end of hair in. "You go and enjoy yourself, dearie."

Lily drew up to the table and partook of a large plain meal in a small pretty manner. She was as attractive as a magazine cover with some excellent reading matter beneath the prettiness. The exterior was all that most men had bothered about till Harry Burnham had chanced to notice her. He was convinced that there was something more worth while beyond the cover, and, with love for his paper knife, he was discovering fresh attractions every day.

Lily had quite a considerable opinion of her own value, but she would have laughed to scorn the idea that it went beyond mere prettiness.

Mrs. Carter let herself down into a large low chair which received her with sagging familiarity. She removed her shoes by the simple method of knocking the heels on the fender. She had a secret longing to loosen her corsets, but there were some things that were impossible in the presence of this lady-like daughter of hers.

"There's nothing like a day's charring fer makin' you enjoy yer own 'ome," she remarked. "I wouldn't be in Mrs. Carson's shoes. I'd rather do 'er washin' than be 'er, even if she is the kind that's mean with the soap and 'eavy with the swank."

Lily flushed a little. "I wish you wouldn't do people's washing, Ma. Why should you go and slave all day for Mrs. Carson while she dresses up and goes off to Town?"

Mrs. Carter closed her eyes and folded her arms. "Oh, well, I can wash as well as anyone, and she don't know the first thing about it. But as fer dressin' up and goin' up to Town—well, I'd look like a dekerated bolster! Now, Mrs. Carson, she looks real tasty when she's got up, so we're both in our proper spears, as you might say."

Lily's face softened. "Spheres, darling," she corrected gently.

Mrs. Carter opened her eyes and sniffed. "Ah, that's one of them catchin' words, like diphtheria. Thank 'Eaven you've been edjercated proper! I suppose Mr. Burnham's had a good edjercation."

Lily got up from the table. "Public school and 'varsity," she said casually.

Mrs. Carter wrinkled her brows and screwed up her nose. "That means one o' them nobby schools where they 'ave to look like tramps got up in gents' cast-offs, don't

it? I remember yer father drove me through a town where there was one o' them schools. It was when we was both working at the Grange. . . . Let me see, it was Windsor we drove through. Would that be Mr. Burnham's school, perhaps?"

Lily smiled indulgently. "Oh, no, not Eton, Ma. Haileybury, I think he said."

"Bless me! Was that Eton, now? And some o' them ragamuffins as likely as not lards and dukes!"

Lily was standing in front of a piece of mirror on the dresser, arranging her hat. A world of mothers looked at her through Mrs. Carter's bright little eyes.

"You grow more like yer father every day, dearie. He was always fussy about 'is looks. It's a good thing you took after 'im, seein' you're a girl. Favourin' me wouldn't 'ave been no 'andicap to a boy. . . . I guess Mr. Burnham wouldn't have looked at you twice if you'd favoured yer old ma."

Lily came and bent over her. "Now you're fishing," she said, tucking a hairpin in with fingers that caressed.

Mrs. Carter caught at her hand and suddenly she said the thing she had been wanting to say all the evening. "Quite sure you're marryin' Mr. Right, duckie?"

Lily moved towards the door. "I'm marrying Harry," she said quietly. "I'll be in soon after ten. Don't wait up." She threw a kiss and was gone.

Mrs. Carter gazed at the door for some seconds. She had something of the look that one sees in a dog's eyes when its adored master speaks in unaccustomed tones. One could almost see her mind groping, lame with its hurt.

Then, with a quick sigh, she bustled into activity. On went the discarded shoes and the perennial plush coat and the dusty hat. Once more the shabby purse was grasped in toil-worn fingers, and Mrs. Carter went pattering along the dim passage that smelt of soapsuds and stew into a dim street that smelt of fried fish and petrol. In half an hour she was inquiring of the porter at Varrance Mansions which floor Mr. Burnham's flat was on.

He looked up from his evening paper, peering over the top of his glasses at her. "Top floor, and the lift ain't workin'; you'll have ter go easy, Ma."

"Don't you get fresh," Mrs. Carter retorted.

"Five floors'll work down a little of the

ombompom, eh?" he queried, and chuckled at his own wit.

"You'll get swelled head so quick you could stand under the lift and push it up," Mrs. Carter said witheringly, and went on up, with the dusty red rose bobbing a pert farewell over the side of her hat.

Arrived at Mr. Burnham's door, she paused for breath and then pushed at the shiny bell-knob. There was a rather slow step along the corridor, the door opened, and a tired voice asked—

"What can I do for you?"

Mrs. Carter grasped her purse very tightly and looked up into a surprisingly contemporary countenance. "Junior partner" had conveyed the idea of youth to her.

"Are you Mr. Burnham?" she asked.

"I am."

"Well, I'm Lily's ma."

He swung the door back then. "Come right in," he said, extending his left hand. "This other one is groggy with neuritis," he explained.

He led her into what Mrs. Carter afterwards described as a "padded room." The carpet was thick, the curtains were thick, the chairs were deep-sprung and leather-covered. Burnham drew one of them forward.

"Sit down," he said. "You must feel tired after that climb. Lily's all right, I hope?"

"She don't know I've come." Mrs. Carter pushed her hat back a little. "She's gone to the pictures, and she said you'd come 'ome, so I took the chance."

He sat down opposite her and leant forward. "Yes?" he said encouragingly.

Mrs. Carter looked at him searchingly with her little bright eyes. She found his maturity disconcerting. This was no impulsive boy, this square-built man with the ruddy face of a farmer, set with steady grey eyes that seemed to have done with dreaming.

"It's about you bein' engaged to my Lily," she said uncertainly. "I expect now you've had people gettin' at you about it, haven't you?"

He decided to be honest. "They've 'got at' me from all four quarters of the globe," he admitted. "My relations are a scattered lot."

Mrs. Carter seized the opening. "Well, I'm from the fifth quarter, as you might say." She relaxed her hold on the bulging purse. "It's not suitable. I'm a charwoman, Lily's my daughter, and you're a gentleman. Lily's lady-like enough, but we're a family

of long livers, and I should always be there to give the lie to 'er genteel ways."

Burnham shifted a little. "Lily's genteel ways are the least lovable thing about her," he put in.

Mrs. Carter considered that for a moment. "You mean that they seem put on?"

"I mean she's very charming without them," he said gently. "She's got enough natural polish to be able to dispense with varnish."

"You think a lot of her, then?" Mrs. Carter asked.

"A little more than is good for my peace of mind," he admitted. "The amazing assurance of her youth braces me."

"It's funny I never thought to ask 'er 'ow old you was," Mrs. Carter said.

"And you're surprised to find me almost middle-aged? Oh, it's terrible, this growing old! It's such a rapid, ruthless business. One day you are looking forward to the thousand possibilities of life and saying, 'I will do this and this when I can,' and the next day you are looking back on a desert and saying, 'I would have done that and that if I could.'"

Mrs. Carter suddenly felt less awe of him. The wise mother in her unconsciously reached out to meet his need. "Ah, but that's when you're witherin' instead of ripenin'," she said.

He rose quickly. "That's it—that's it! Lily will keep me from withering."

Mrs. Carter remembered her fears. "But what'll your swell friends think? They'll ask questions, an' even if I keep in the background they'll nose me out. An' Lily's got ideas. She'll want to do the 'eavy'."

Burnham moved to the mantelshelf and put his arm on it, his right arm. "Oh, curse this arm!" he exclaimed.

Mrs. Carter got to her feet, all concern. "What you want is massage," she said. "And if that ain't lucky, now! I've got a tube of balm in me pocket. Mrs. Carson, where I go to wash, she gets the neuralgy something shocking, and I took it to 'er to try to-day. Let me do it for yer."

"I'll be jolly thankful." He pulled his coat off and rolled up his shirt-sleeve.

Mrs. Carter looked at her hands. "Oh, but me 'ands!" she said ruefully. "I never stopped to wash 'em before I came out." She held them out for his inspection. "Imagine them at one of Lily's tea-parties!

"Having them there will be better than

imagining," he said gently. He went to a door and, opening it, switched on the light. "Perhaps you would rather go in and wash them, though."

Mrs. Carter went in and he closed the door on her. She gazed round the immaculate tile and nickel of the bathroom, then crossed diffidently to the basin and washed her hands. She decided that the fine linen towel was better left to look at, and, lifting her coat, dried her hands on her apron. Then she breathed on the tap and with the corner of her apron polished it up again.

"That room's a credit to 'ooever does for you," she remarked, as she emerged.

She made him sit in the depth of an easy-chair, while she took a straight-backed one beside him. Burnham closed his eyes under the soothing effect of the gentle pressure of her fingers and the penetrating odour of the balm.

"Did Lily's father have neuritis?" he asked sleepily.

He felt the tremor in Mrs. Carter's fingers, and, opening his eyes, caught the sudden bleak look of tragedy on her face. It came and passed quickly, as quickly as tragedy will come and go on the face of a clown and with the same grotesqueness of contrast.

"Oh, no, none o' them fiddlin' complaints. It was the tuberculous took 'im."

"Lily barely remembers him, does she?"

Mrs. Carter shook her head. "No, she was only four when he was took, an' I was only twenty-four."

Her fingers were working with gentle, even pressure, and Burnham closed his eyes again, drowsy with the temporary release from the nagging pain of his arm. The clock ticked ponderously, and Mrs. Carter's voice grew soft with reminiscence.

"We worked together at the Grange. He was outdoor footman and I was under-'ousemaid. I wasn't bad-lookin' then, though you might not think it. Always on the plump side, but not too much of it in them days. There was one lilac print that I 'ad—real tasty it was, as prints go, an' 'e was very partial to it. And I'd got it on all clean an' fresh the day 'e met me on the turn of the back staircase, and kissed me without so much as by yer leave. 'You shouldn't 'a' done that,' I ses, all of a tremble like. 'Why not?' 'e ses. 'And us goin' to be married come Christmas.' 'It's the first I've 'eard of it,' I ses. 'Well, it won't be the last, Katie,' 'e ses. And when I got back to the servants' 'all, they didn't half chaff me becos me lilac print was all crumpled and

me cap was over one ear." She paused and moved his arm a little.

"Lilac print sounds awfully pretty," he said.

"Yes, they could make prints in them days, and we wore 'em all full and starched. Six yards to a dress there was, and the mistress give us all a length every Christmas,

Christmas card one, too. Mistress did the thing in style for us, and the 'ole house-party came to the church. It don't seem possible it was me. It's like another life. When I put me mind back to it, it's like lookin' on at a play. He was 'andsome enough for a play, Lily's father was."

"You were happy with him?"

Mrs. Carter smiled, a remote smile as though she were looking down on him from a far height. "The people that write all them sarcastic things about married life, they're just plumb ignorant. They wouldn't write like that if they really knew."



"The people that write all them sarcastic things about married life, they're just plumb ignorant. They wouldn't write like that if they really knew." "What would they say if they really knew?" Mrs. Carter shook her head slowly.

done up seasonable like with a paper band of 'olly and deckeration round it. I've got me lilac print to this day—set more store by it than I do by me weddin' dress."

"And were you married come Christmas?"

"On Christmas Day itself, and a real

"What would they say if they really knew?"

Mrs. Carter shook her head slowly. "Nothink—they'd be dumb. There ain't no words for the glory of it when the right two gets together."

Burnham cast his drowsiness from him.

"Then why come from the fifth quarter to try and part the right two?"

Though she herself could not have defined the feeling, Mrs. Carter was conscious of having been caught with her guard down. "But I ain't sure you are the right two," she said at last. "After all, it's a bad beginning that I haven't met you before because Lily's ashamed of me."

"But that isn't why she has kept us apart."

Mrs. Carter undid the top button of her coat, a sure indication with her of mental trouble rather than of physical discomfort. "What do you mean?" she asked, sensing his earnestness.

Burnham rolled his shirt-sleeve down and made to move.

"Don't you budge," she commanded, "and leave yer arm lyin' along the arm of that chair fer at least a quarter of a hour. More than 'alf the benefit of massage is the restin' after it's done."

Burnham made a face at her in a boyish fashion that made him look ten years younger.

"But I've something I want to talk to you about, something serious, and sitting still makes it much more difficult—mother."

Mrs. Carter caught a breath. "Don't call me that," she said.

"I'm awfully sorry—it slipped out. Don't you like it?"

"It ain't that. It makes me go all of a jelly and muddles me mind like, an' *somebody's* got to keep their head in this affair." She undid another button. "You're makin' me fair nervous," she admitted. "You ain't goin' to tell me you've been and gone and got married at a registry behind me back?"

"Oh, no, no! What I've got to say had to be said once we met—that's why Lily has tried to keep us apart. If you heard her speak of you, you'd know it wasn't because she was ashamed. She told me once that whatever there was in her that attracted me, it was every bit due to you, because she owed even her looks to your loving care."

"She said that!" Mrs. Carter pushed her hat back and leant forward with a hand on each knee, in order to look into his face and make sure of his sincerity. "Well, now, and to think o' the way she flew at me when I wouldn't let 'er start puttin' crackers on 'er 'air! With all due respect to Mr. Marcel, I ses give me one natcherl kink before all yer artificial waves and frizzes, an' crackers

ain't no better, I ses. They only breaks the 'air, besides bein' a difficult 'abit to get out of when yer wants to get married. And if I am a charwoman, I ain't never 'eld with bein' sloppy in yer dress for breakfast. Well, it only shows that it ain't easy to understand yer own children. Called me everythink under the sun, she did, and to think she said that to you!"

Burnham put his hand over hers. "She thinks so much of you that she has dreaded to hurt you with a discovery she has made. She wasn't satisfied with her health some weeks back, and I persuaded her to go to a specialist I know in Town."

Mrs. Carter shrank a little and lifted a stricken face. "Not—not the tuberculous!" she whispered.

"Not badly, no. But one lung is affected, and Burton—the specialist—said that she would probably, in the normal course of things, live to a ripe old age if she could get out of England."

Mrs. Carter drew her lips in, and her head went slowly from side to side. It was the first action in which her spirit had shown subservient to her years.

After one glance at her, Burnham looked away again quickly, and plunged on. "I don't know if Lily has told you that I was fruit-farming in California when War broke out. I sold up and came over to enlist. Then my eldest brother was killed, so, when the War was over, I took his place in the old firm to please Dad. But now my younger brother is out of college and quite keen to come into the business, so there's no reason why I shouldn't go back to California. It isn't as though the Mater were still alive."

Mrs. Carter went on shaking her head. Then suddenly she looked up with a gleam of hope. "But it's Switzerland's the place for the tuberculous, isn't it? California ain't no special good?"

Burnham avoided her eyes; their pain hurt him terribly.

"Burton said California would be splendid and the farm life would be just the thing for her."

Mrs. Carter closed her eyes, and difficult tears forced their way through the lids.

"It don't seem just," she said brokenly. "It all seems such a waste o' time. Startin' with the lilac print that took Bert's eye . . . through all them years, the first of them so 'appy and the others just full of striving to bring Lily up as genteel as what he was. Such a pretty baby she was—that was the only time I was a bit frightened—she looked

too pretty to last in those days. And now to come to this. . . . California's a long way, ain't it? No goin' over to 'ave a week with you both in August when the families I works for goes away? It seems a bit blasphemous like, but I don't see there was much sense in lettin' me be so 'appy with Bert if this was what had to come."

"But remember, mother, the specialist says she's bound to be all right out there. I've told her there won't be much social life for her. There are only one or two other farms within easy reach."

"You've got your ole place back, you mean? It's all settled." The bleak look in Mrs. Carter's usually cheery face was terrible to witness.

"We want you to let us be married next week, and to book our passages on the *Cutania*—she sails at the end of the month. I think the fact that Lily is willing to go out to that rather lonely life with me proves that she—she does care a bit—enough for her happiness, anyway."

Mrs. Carter buttoned up the perennial plush coat and got to her feet unsteadily. "I was terrible lonely till she was old enough to

be company," she said, "so I suppose it won't 'urt me to be lonely again. Scrubbin' and washin' don't give yer much time to grizzle."

Burnham put his hands on her shoulders. "You aren't going to be lonely any more," he said. "It's a wooden shack in California, and it needs a lot of scrubbing. You'll be horribly sea-sick, mother, but you've got to come, too."

As he bent to kiss her, the telephone bell rang. He picked up the receiver, keeping his arm round Mrs. Carter's shoulders.

"Hallo! Oh, is that you, Kid? Yes, she's here safe and sound. She knows everything. She came from the fifth quarter to try and part us." He chuckled softly. "Wait up, Kid, and I'll bring her home."

Mrs. Carter picked up her old black purse. "What is there specially funny about sayin' I came from the fifth quarter?" she demanded, with a flash of her old spirit.

"Nothing specially funny—only something special. You don't mind coming to one of the ordinary four quarters with us, do you, mother?"





"The man, as the wind bore a cloud of smoke down upon them, dodged round the gate."

A PRISON OF FLAME

By PHILIP G. CHADWICK

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

SPURWELL MILLS blazed briskly in the frosty winter air. Attracted by the great glow in the sky, thousands had congregated in the narrow streets around to watch the awe-inspiring spectacle of the conflagration, and from near and far others came hurrying to pack themselves into the already congested ways. Four policemen at one corner were driving the people back from where they were

pressing into the mill yard. There was a coming and going of perspiring workers over by the half-frozen dam.

At one end of the main buildings the flames leaped high into the air through the pall of dense smoke, and from hundreds of windows shone the glow of the spreading furnace within.

An electric-lit landaulet hooted its way gradually through the press and, coming

to a standstill at the main gateway, two figures jumped out and pushed their way roughly through the crowd.

"All right, constable," said one brusquely, as a hand was laid on his shoulder. "I'm Higson."

The policeman peered down at the owner of Spurwell Mills to confirm the statement. "Shouldn't go in, sir; it's dangerous," he said. "The willey-sheds are blazing, an' there's glass flying. Hi, you!" he roared to a man who had sidled in through the gate.

The man stepped back quickly and then, as the wind bore a cloud of smoke down upon them, suddenly darted forward again unseen, dodged round the gate, and ran into the shadow of an outhouse. The crowd having been driven back sufficiently, the huge gates were swung to.

The man in the shadow laughed softly and strained his ears to listen to the conversation of the little group standing by the wicket gate. He placed one hand over his mouth the better to control his laughter. "Serves him right," he thought, "serves the old beast right. What's he saying?"

Through the roar of the flames he heard the police inspector shouting: "We've done all we can, sir. The dam's mostly frozen, but they're doing all that's possible at that end. Our engine's broke down, an' the Hadley Bridge is gone 'Alifax way to another fire. Can't get one nowhere."

The man in the shadow, unable to restrain himself longer, chuckled outright as Joshua Higson cursed loudly. They did not hear him.

"I told you, sir," came the voice of the manager, who had accompanied Higson in the car, "the whole of the bottom storey is on fire, the willey-sheds and the old warehouse. There's no way in and no help to be had. They'll be gutted. Thank God, everyone's safe. They'd just started the night-shift, but they're all out."

Joshua Higson gazed grimly at the spreading destruction and wiped his brow. "I don't give a hang for the mills," he said; "they are covered to the last penny; but I'd give fifty thousand if I could find a man who'd get up to the top storey for me and—fetch something that is there."

The unseen listener craned forward so as not to miss the next words.

"Not the new dyeing process?" exclaimed the manager. "You don't mean—"

"All the papers are up there in the experimental room," said Higson, with forced calm. "I have the desk key. I should have

been down by now to transfer them to the safe. No, we haven't a copy. An oversight; Heaven knows!"

"Fifty thousand!" muttered the man in the shadow. It would take some years for a clerk to make that!"

"They're worth hundreds of thousands to me," said Higson, almost as though in answer. "How about the fire-escape?"

"Anyone would be burnt to a cinder, sir, if he tried to get in that way. It's absolutely cut off, is the sprinkler end of the mill, and the experimental room with it."

The man in the shadow pulled his coat across his white collar and peered out at the wind-blown flames as they spread hungrily over the great pile. His eyes wandered towards the chimney at the far end, at the top of which he could see the platform erected for the purpose of pointing the masonry; up to that summit he knew the steeplejacks' ladder led. From thence his gaze fell to the new sprinkler tower, rising to over half the height of the stack, which it all but touched. A plan was forming in his mind, a scheme born of that reckless spirit which, years ago, in the R.A.F., had won him the name of "Dare-Devil Dunning."

"Jove," he exclaimed, "I can do it! It's not the first time I've been up a stack." Hesitating a moment, he crept out into the wildly-dancing shadows of the yard, and paused in sudden consternation as his ears were arrested by a few crisp words spoken by Higson.

"What's the cause?" he was saying. "That young cur Dunning I sacked a fortnight ago. I'll bet he's at the bottom of it, the——"

The "young cur Dunning" waited to hear no more, but, diving round the corner of the outsheds, pelted down the dark alleyway between them and the towering mill wall, his face flaming at the insult he had heard. He set fire to the mills out of revenge! He swore aloud passionately. He would show Higson that two could play the game of beggar-my-neighbour, the game of the top-dog.

As he emerged into the open and began picking his way amidst the scattered bales, his mind ran over the events of a fortnight before. He thought of Higson's daughter Sylvia, who worked as the manager's secretary because she "just wanted to," Higson, hard-bitten, self-made man that he was, had thought it good for his only child to work for her pin-money. Dunning had fallen in love with her and she with him, a

clerk in a position lower than her own, yet nevertheless an ex-airman. Then there had been that abominable interview with her father, which ended for Dunning in a week's wages and dismissal.

"I can't have clerks worrying my daughter," Higson had said coldly. "I am afraid I must relinquish your services. And"—his thick finger had shaken in Dunning's flaming face—"never try to see her again!"

Dunning glanced backward over his shoulder before entering the open shed before him. No one was about.

Sylvia! He had seen her twice since then, and he would win her yet, penniless as he now was. Suspected of firing the mills! He would blackmail the old devil—get the plans of the new process and blackmail him.

Dunning fumbled about in the darkness of the shed, his mind working quickly. A strong rope was what he wanted. Having procured this from the assorted tackle of the shed, he looped it over his shoulder and, emerging into the open, passed with set face towards the stack.

Over by the main gate an animated conversation was being carried on. "That there stack," said one of the constables, "is too close to the mill, inspector. They're pointing it, an' once the fire gets a hold of the sprinkler, the woodwork'll go like jimmy-o."

"You're right," said Higson. "We had to build close. There isn't more than a yard between them, and the sprinkler will not stop the flames, because it isn't working yet. You'd better try to move the crowd back, inspector, in case the stack comes down."

Their gaze, centred upon the black pillar towering into the sky, did not perceive the little figure that swung itself quickly up the steeplejacks' ladder, a rope coiled over one shoulder, and a look of angry determination upon its face.

With upturned eyes Dunning mounted into the cold wintry air. The mills were on the far side of the stack from the ladder, so that the fierce heat of the flames did not reach him; the cold iron of the rungs struck into his fingers. Up and up he clambered into the darkness.

He thought vaguely of what the vast throng beneath, lit with the light of the flames, must look like—a wonderful sight it would be—but he did not glance down.

When he thought he was about half-way up, he paused for a moment. Already his arms ached slightly. Was he a fool for trying this hare-brained escapade? He

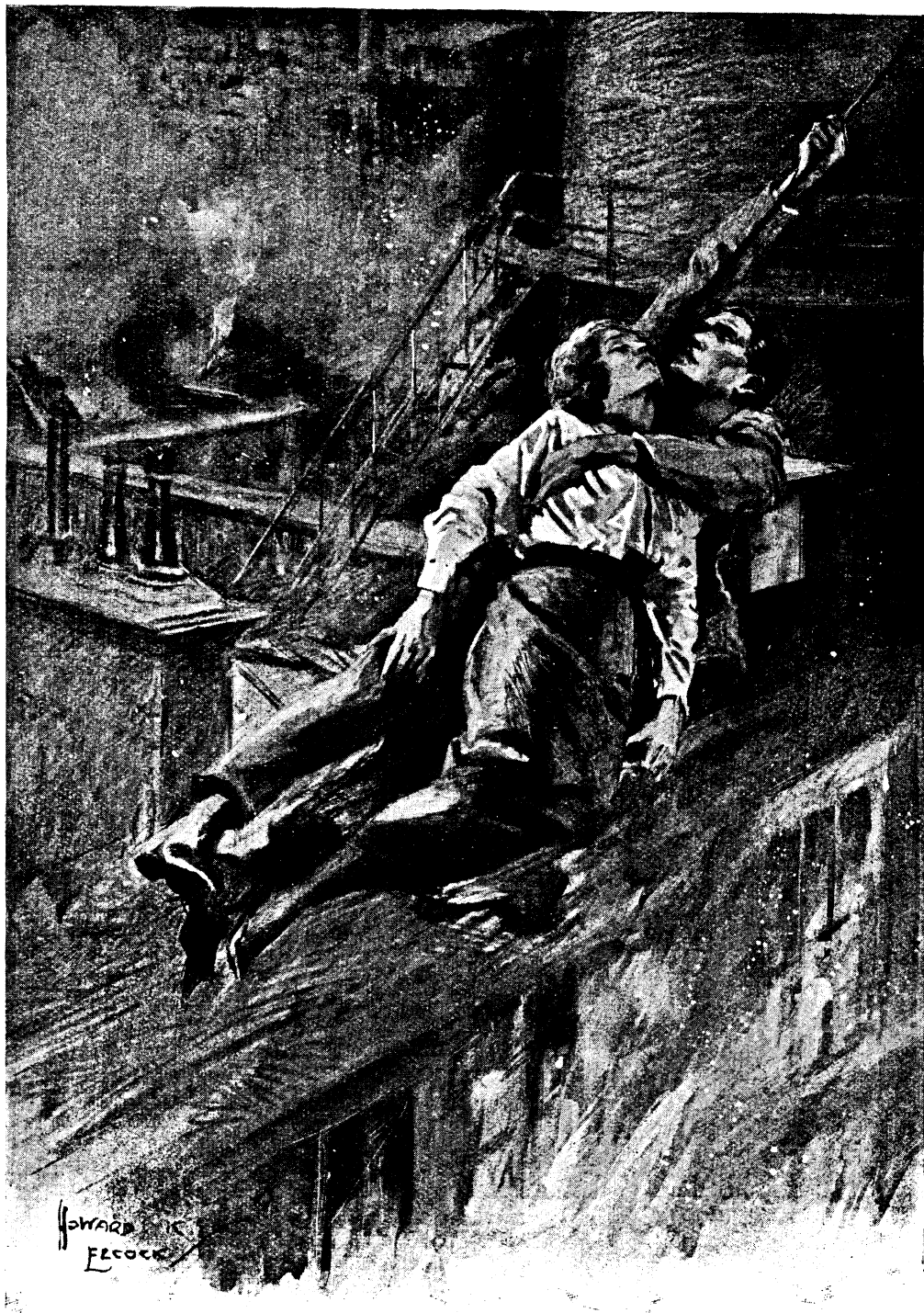
comforted himself with the thought that, should fear overtake him at the top, he could descend once more to safety. Fear! A scornful half-laugh escaped him; that was the thing which other people suffered from. Another might lose his nerve up on that windy pinnacle and never dare the descent, might crouch high up on the scaffolding in terror through the long night until the hungry flames reached him, and he and his flimsy wooden platform were engulfed together. Dare-Devil Dunning was not that sort. Yet such thoughts were "asking for it," he decided, and continued upwards, humming softly to himself as though he had not a nerve in him.

The roaring flames dinned into his ears. With the effort of climbing he was perspiring freely. Over his head the stars became obscured, and a black mass began to descend upon him, and he realised he was nearing the most ticklish part of the ascent, the point where the ladder bent outwards to round the projecting platform, where for a few moments he would have to hang down over the world beneath like a fly crawling up a sloping ceiling.

Coming to where two struts joined the ladder to the masonry, he pondered whether or not to swing himself round and rest a while on one of them, but it occurred to him that there was a chance of the rope catching if he did that, so he went steadily on instead. That idea of the rope becoming entangled troubled him. It would in any case be an additional weight upon his arm when rounding the curve, and, for all he knew, there were nails and other projections upon the edge of the scaffolding on which it might conceivably catch.

He found himself at the point where he must climb outwards, upwards, yet nevertheless outwards. With an effort he went straight on, and in five seconds had one hand stretched out on the flat planking above. His nerve trembled, and in a panic he hauled himself upwards to fall on his hands and knees in safety.

He found himself to be breathless and quivering in every limb; lucky for him he had not been consciously aware of the strain of ascent. He endeavoured to laugh, but with only partial success, and laid himself flat down, with both hands outstretched. One hand gripped a board edge. For a moment he was given over to surprise at this, surprise changing quickly to alarm; but his steady mind continued to serve him well, and he remembered that between the



"They swung down and out, wrenching horribly and sickeningly at the lowest point

platform and the brickwork there was a space of some two feet, left, he imagined, for the passage of buckets. He chuckled

in relief, yet the idea of that drop on both sides of him made him shiver slightly. Nasty, those two drops.



of descent ; then, jerking sideways, they passed round the column in a wide swerve.

Perhaps for three minutes he lay flat, watching the eerie light of the flames behind the head of the stack. Then he

decided it was time to be moving. The worst part of the journey was to come, but, that over, it would be easy going. With his

nerves quite steady once more, he began to crawl gradually round the platform.

How the chimney swayed! The wind lulled as he turned the corner, and he was safe, lying flat on his face by the time it recommenced. Before him the conflagration roared. The centre of the mills was a mass of flames, and, as he watched, they spread visibly towards him along the grey expanse of roof. Speed was necessary if he were to reach that top room in time to return in safety. Yet he crouched there in dumb admiration of the terrific scene of destruction.

He would have given much to look down and behold the thronging streets below, but common-sense forbade any such foolhardy indulgence. He wondered if Sylvia Higson were down there, and wondered what she would think did she know where he was.

Then, with a shock, he realised that the rope was still slung over his shoulder. It had been his intention to fasten it to one of the iron rungs of the ladder, and now he must crawl back again to accomplish this end, for otherwise he would have no means of return.

What a wind! It would be necessary to keep as flat as possible during the return, as once he had done in France when he had had to crawl out upon the plane of his machine to cut loose a flying wire which threatened to become entangled in the propeller. He would imagine he was doing that now, for he had not been afraid then; it had seemed the only possible thing to do. It was the only possible thing to do now.

Unhitching the rope from his shoulder, he wriggled round and, with the wind screaming over him, commenced the journey. The stack swayed in the high air, and for an instant he was enveloped in terrifying smoke from the mills. He halted until it cleared, then crawled on until he found himself at the ladder. Quickly he began to fasten the end of the rope to the top rung, tying knot upon knot until his fingers ached. He pulled upon the rope tentatively, then harder, and a little harder. That would be safe.

In a little while he was round at the other side again, observing how the flames had advanced. Crouching down, he flung the rope forwards and watched its sinuous length uncoil itself into the shadow of the sprinkler roof, the vibration of its movement tingling through his hands. Knowing well that, did he hesitate, his nerve might fail him, he dragged himself away from contemplation of the void, and in the flame-lit

darkness lowered himself over the edge. With an effort of will he tried to sing, and his old dare-devil spirit returned.

"I'm getting better ev'ry day," he mumbled to the night air. The wind smacked in his face; howled malignantly around the masonry, then died away. Carefully, for fear of dragging the rope off the edge of the platform, he lowered himself hand over hand into the abyss and, laughing softly in excitement, soon felt the leads of the sprinkler roof beneath his feet.

Still laughing, he scrambled up the slight slope of the roof, his eyes fixed on the flames dancing about weirdly beyond the coping. He discovered that he felt very sick. But the worst of the upward journey was now over, and as for his return. . . . When he had those papers, nothing on earth would stay him.

It was the work of but a few minutes to locate the iron ladder which led to the main roof. This done, he swung himself down swiftly, gripping alternate rungs, and at the bottom sat down a moment to recover breath. He was surprised to see the height of the tower above him.

The roof of the new mill on which he sat was as yet untouched by the flames, but the heat was sweltering, and from beneath rose a deep angry hum as though the factory still laboured in the hour of its destruction.

Though the roof-trap by which he intended to enter was close by, he allowed himself a minute to look over the coping into the far-off streets, and it was then that the watching thousands first saw him. He must have appeared to them as the most amazing and daring little figure as he stood there waving his hand jubilantly.

The roar of their welcome died into a frightened hush as he disappeared once more towards the roof-trap. Only Joshua Higson and his manager would realise his intention; to the rest of that massed congress of watchers he was unexplainable in his foolhardy escapade. Dunning knew that Higson would understand, and he exulted as he made his way to the experimental laboratory. He hoped Sylvia was down there admiring—Sylvia who loved him despite her father.

He had expected to find it dark, but from the open stairway came a lurid glare and a roar of conquering fire. There was no time to be lost. Three steps carried him to the desk in the corner.

He leaned over it, with blood pounding in his head and wildly staring eyes.

The front of the desk was a mass of broken wood, with the splintered lid thrown back. No need to look through the jumbled documents within; he had been forestalled. Someone had been there before him and had secured the vital papers.

For a while he crouched down over the rifled desk, sobbing with unbearable disappointment, and then, with some vague idea of returning, he was staggering towards the red-lit panel of the open door. From what seemed a far distance a huge rumble sounded and spread nearer, and then the whole structure rocked and palpitated and resounded to an ear-splitting crash.

For a considerable time he clung to the door-jamb half conscious, dimly realising that one of the floors below, with its ranks of abandoned spinning mules, had fallen. He felt himself trapped in a great oven, and, blinded by the light, staggered forward with no other idea in his stunned mind beyond that of movement.

To the left down the passage a great pillar of flame roared up the circular stairway. In front on the stone floor of the landing a white blotch shrank and grew before his eyes.

Gradually he realised that this white thing was merely a part of something else, the other half of which was apparently black. It came to him without surprise that what he was looking at was the figure of a girl in a white blouse and a skirt of dark material, who lay flat on her back upon the flags as though dead. In one hand he perceived that she clutched a sheaf of papers.

Even then he did not altogether understand, but stood staring witlessly, coughing in the acrid smoke, and it was only when the figure moved faintly that his reason returned and he sprang forward, realising the meaning of what he saw.

Some girl-clerk from the offices had come upstairs, when the fire alarm sounded, to retrieve the papers, and, trampled down by the outrush from the neighbouring work-rooms, had been left unconscious. A girl-clerk! There was only one girl-clerk he could remember as he stood over the recumbent form.

He brushed the tears from his stinging eyes and peered into the white face to confirm his worst fears. It was Sylvia—Sylvia with the process papers crumpled in her right hand, and a dull stain of blood on her forehead.

In that moment Dunning changed from a hare-brained thief into a hero. Swinging

the slim body up, he worked the sheaf of papers from her grip, tucked them into the inside pocket of his coat, and then half carried, half dragged her to the step-ladder leading to the roof.

There was no hesitation now. In the comparatively clear air from the trap he could breathe freely and, his mind working with a new clarity, he realised the supreme task which lay before him. It was useless to try to find the fire-escape—access to that was through the room across the landing, and in the blinding smoke he could not hope to find it—nor could he have passed the blazing stories below had he done so.

Hoisting the girl on to his shoulder, he struggled up the ladder and on across the roof. He reappeared to the excited crowd below, ascending the ladder up the sprinkler tower, holding Sylvia over his shoulder, and resting wearily at every third rung, but he did not hear their wild shouts of welcome. Only a few yards it was to the roof, yet each effort to raise himself higher made his arms throb and burn as though the flames were already around him. When finally he disappeared on to the high roof, they began to see that his effort at rescue was doomed to failure, was but an endeavour to stave off the inevitable to the last moment.

Dunning himself realised it. That slender rope stretching upwards to the top of the chimney was all that lay between them and death upon their lofty, fire-surrounded prison in the sky.

The mad folly of his escapade came home to him. Alone and unhampered he could not have swung himself up that sloping rope to safety. It was the blindness of temper which had led him to essay the impossible task, to throw his life away upon an insane though glorious burglary; but as he stood there with the girl's unconscious body in his arms, he thanked God for that mad moment when he had conceived the idea. Years and years ago it seemed to him, that dash down the dark mill yard, his face burning with shame at Higson's insult—years ago that long climb towards the coldly regardant stars. They could at least die together.

His wearied limbs throbbed and throbbed, his eyes dwelt unseeingly upon the sea of fire below. Death! Even in France when the arch-enemy was all around him, when the little messengers of his doom were spattering on the failing engine and riddling the aluminium tank which was as his very heart, he had not thought about death.

He crouched down in the deep shadow. Why should he think about death now, when everything was so peaceful and cool, when the wind fanned his heated cheeks and bid him lie down and sleep in safety? Safety at least for the time, until that moment which must come was at hand, and then a quick end to all.

He struggled against his mental exhaustion and the desire to be at peace for these last passing minutes of his life. He pulled himself to his feet and looked down at Sylvia lying lifelessly at his feet. Afraid of death? No, only of the hopeless struggle for life.

Bending down, he lifted Sylvia's head in his hands. Did *she* want to lie here and wait calmly for the enemy? The enemy was there below, coming nearer and nearer, ever nearer. For one dreadful moment he imagined the flames curling and questioning round her silent body, darkening her white cheeks with their hot kiss, and then he was standing upright, his hands to his brow, cursing the rolling smoke-clouds above. This high, cool spot was as a mirage in the desert, the desert of flame. He peeped over the coping and jeered at the gesticulating, angry flames, laughing excitedly. Fools to think they would get him! There was a way out; there was always a way out. He grew very calm and carried his burden across to the far side. Of course there was a way out.

"I'm getting better ev'ry day," he sang softly. Plenty of time—time to think out a plan. ". . . ev'ry day."

Mounting to the coping, he surveyed the position coolly. It was his plan to fasten the rope round the two of them and then swing downwards into the darkness. Though the odds against their coming through alive were great, it was the one chance. He shook the rope free from the scaffolding above until it looped round to the far side where it was fastened. If the rope held, and they did not strike the stack, then, the first rush over, they would swing pendulum-wise until they came to rest in a line with the steeplejack's ladder. After that it depended on those below to ascend and bring them safely to earth.

The watching crowd saw him disappear. Minute by minute the time passed, and then a strange, lumpish figure appeared, a bundle

like two people fastened together. The bundle put out an arm and waved it.

He was thinking about the parachute descent which had been his last experience abroad; after that he had been deemed unfit for flying. He laughed. Unfit? Standing with his back to the void and Sylvia tied to him face to face, he took a step outwards.

They swung down and out, wrenching horribly and sickeningly at the lowest point of descent; then, jerking sideways, they passed round the column in a wide swerve. Then up, up, up. They paused high in the air, and the flames seemed to have receded to a great distance. What a wonderful thing a rope was to carry one swiftly away from danger, up and up into the cold air like a magic carpet of old!

Now the flames were drawing nearer again. There was a hurricane wind hitting him in the face, choking him, blinding him. . . .

* * * * *

It was forcing liquid fire down his throat, dragging him down into the maw of that flaming beast below. Somehow the pressure of Sylvia's body upon his was gone; the rope must have loosened, and now she was falling far below him, as he would soon be falling. Yet there was her face looking into his, looking at him from where a moment ago the flames had surged. Why was she wearing a bandage round her bright hair? He perceived that there were two Sylvias, both with bandages on their heads, and then there appeared a third face. What was old Higson doing up here in mid-air, swinging, swinging?

The two Sylvias seemed to merge abruptly into one face which came very close to him and smiled. Higson's face persisted by itself, most unreasonably. He wished all things to be Sylvia, all things Sylvia. He sat up most amazingly on the buoyant air and centred his eyes upon the unwanted face of Higson; he knew how to be rid of him.

"In my coat, sir," he said quite distinctly, and "Sylvia!" in a little sob, and then the flames roared up and vanished as suddenly as they had appeared.

The nurse laid him gently back on the bed. "He'll sleep now," she whispered. "You go to bed yourself, miss—you need it,"



“‘He couldn’t be ill-tempered, could you, my sweet?’”

A DOG DAY

By LEOPOLD SPERO

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

THE Pekingese is a dog much maligned. He is classed with the Pom and the toy terrier in the category of pets, which means that in the eyes of common-sense he is not a dog at all.

Very little credit is given to him for his genuine fighting powers. Nevertheless, although spoilt by centuries of adulation and cosseting, the Peke can fight—when you let him.

Choo Ling had a pedigree as long as that of Confucius, and he was as proud as that philosopher was humble. There was reason for his pride. Therefore, when he slipped out on his own one afternoon and paraded impertinently down the streets of Langhorne Park, he was much surprised at the attitude of the fox-terrier who confronted him on the pavement. The fox-terrier was also

unattended. Being an outdoor dog, unaccustomed to the sight of these outlandish foreign devils, Jack put his opinion of the matter into a series of short and challenging barks, to which Choo Ling replied in the low growl which he usually reserved for visitors who came to tea.

The sequel happened very suddenly, very noisily, and with such dramatic force that even in that quiet little street a large crowd collected from nowhere. The fight was interrupted at its genuine best by the appearance of a policeman, who took both animals into custody, hurried them off to the station, and later on returned them to their respective owners in a damaged but still defiant condition.

Choo Ling’s mistress was distraught with concern at the sight of her beloved, with

thick strands of his long yellow hair distributed all over his coat. There was a rent in his left ear, and his left forepaw was matted with blood!

Choo Ling was patient over Miss Somerset's attention, but took no steps to be nice to the vet. when he called.

"What did you say?" inquired pretty Miss Somerset.

The vet. was mumbling under his breath, and she suspected it was no compliment. But Miss Somerset was such a good client that the vet. disguised his feelings, and explained that he had not said anything.

"I thought you were calling the poor dear names."

"Oh, no!" said the vet., hiding behind his back the finger which Choo Ling had so ungratefully nipped.

"I should think not. Tell me, will he get over it?"

"I think he will."

"Is he seriously hurt?"

"No."

"Ah, but how can you say that? Just look at his poor ear and his poor little paddy!"

The vet. had already looked at the poor little paddy and the poor ear, and only the anticipation of a generous fee prevented him from saying what he thought.

"He'll be all right in a day or two. There's very little wrong with him. And I dare say he gave as good as he received. He's got the pluck."

"Of course he has!"

"And a bad temper."

Pretty Miss Somerset caught Choo Ling up to her face, which he licked warmly and comprehensively.

"He hasn't, the darling! He *couldn't* be ill-tempered, could you, my sweet? What kind of a dog do you think it was that attacked him? Some great bull pup, or one of those nasty Alsations?"

"I don't think so. I doubt if it was a dog any bigger than himself."

"The policeman said it was a terrier," said Miss Somerset.

"It probably was a terrier," said the vet.

"Do you know whose the other dog was?" Miss Somerset nodded grimly. "I have the name and address. I'm going to get the nasty creature destroyed."

"Ah, but you can't do that!"

"I can. I'm going to. I saw my solicitor this morning, and he's going to take out a summons at the police court against this Mr. Bennett, whoever he is. I expect he's

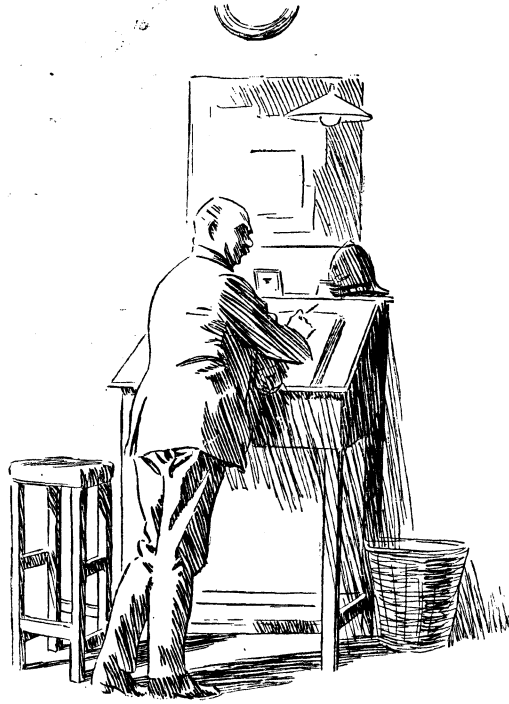
some nasty, grumpy old retired colonel, who thinks he can go about with a pack of ferocious hounds, doing what he likes. Do you know a man called Bennett living near here?"

"In Cheltenham Terrace?"

"Yes, it is Cheltenham Terrace."

The vet. looked at Miss Somerset. There was an ominous glint in her eyes.

"I do—at least, I know the people."



"What's he like?"

"Oh, you've guessed what he's like," said the vet. "And now I really must be going. I'll be in on Thursday. Meanwhile, you know what the treatment is."

Miss Somerset handed him an envelope containing his fee, thanked him, and saw him to the door. "And do you think my darling will be all right?"

"I'm sure your darling will be all right."

The darling growled in confirmation of the diagnosis, and when the vet. got to the end of the garden path he turned and growled in return. Then he proceeded on his way to 25, Cheltenham Terrace, where he found Jack and his owner awaiting him.

Tom Bennett was neither old nor grumpy, nor at all ill-looking. But he was very angry as he exhibited the scars about which Jack himself was quite unconcerned.

"Well," inquired the vet., patting the patient, "how's things to-day?"

Jack gave a leap, and licked his doctor on the face with the greatest good-humour and thoroughness, after which he submitted patiently to examination, and behaved in all respects with the perfect society manners of a thoroughbred fox-terrier.

"He was rather handicapped," said the vet. "He'd have given a far better account of himself if he'd been able to get through the hair of that ugly Peke."

"How do you know it was a Peke?" inquired Bennett.

The vet. was a little taken aback at this question, but he recollected himself in time.

"You told me the policeman said so."

"So I did."

"Who owns it?"

"Some old cat. You know the kind of women who keep these little canine

spinster. The sort of woman who owns Pekes. Just as you say."

"Then she's got a surprise coming to her," said Jack's master. "It's a darned shame the way these sour old maids fuss and pet their nasty little lap-dogs, feeding them on chicken and port until they're ready to bust with ill-temper and spite. You can't tell me that any dog who would set upon a harm-



"Don't!" said the ministering angel. "Don't! You mustn't get up!"

insults. Somerset's her name. She lives in Graystoke Gardens. Do you know her?"

"I've heard of her."

"What's she like?"

Jack's master put the question in a voice which seemed to indicate that no friend of Choo Ling's owner would be any friend of his. So the vet. was diplomatic.

"She's more or less as you describe. A

less little feller like Jack isn't a danger to society."

"Jack can look after himself."

"He did," said Bennett. "But I'm taking up the cudgels now."

"What? Have you been to see your solicitor?"

"Why not? The law says that a dog that is a public danger has no right to be at large. I wish I'd seen the fight."

"I heard it was a pretty good dust-up."

"I dare say it was," said Bennett, patting Jack on the head. "But, anyway, my solicitor is taking out a summons to get the other beast destroyed."

The vet. whistled.

"You don't think he can?"

"Oh, I don't know. At all events, I wish you luck."

"Thanks," said Bennett, producing a little white envelope and passing it into the vet.'s hand. "And now what about treatment?"

Decisions were taken.

"It'll serve the old cat right," said Bennett. "Next time she buys a dog she'll buy a real one. Are you going to attend court?"

"What day?"

"Monday morning, at ten."

"I might," said the vet.

The more Miss Somerset thought of it, the less complimentary was the picture she drew of the owner of the other dog. Crabbed brutality, doddering insolence, self-opinionated disregard of other people's rights and feelings, all these were the essential qualities of a man who could own a dog that treated Choo Ling in a manner so outrageous. She would scarcely have been complimented had she known what a reciprocal picture was being drawn of herself.

But she and Bennett both found satisfaction in the knowledge that before long guilt would receive its proper reward, justice would be satisfied, and a measure of compensation be awarded for the injuries to their pets.

Mr. Stokes, stipendiary magistrate at the local police court, looking through Monday's list on Saturday morning, swore softly under his breath.

"Did you speak, sir?" inquired his clerk.

"Yes, Smith, but not in legal language. Are you aware that if it was not for this wretched little dog-fight cross-summons, there would be no court at all on Monday?"

"It'll soon be over, sir."

"I don't know. There are solicitors in the case on both sides."

"Who are they, sir?"

"Young Parkin and old Clatworthy."

The clerk whistled.

"You may well whistle," said the magistrate. "If there ever was a pair of bores, those are the two. I doubt whether the old man is worse than the young man, or *vice versa*. The old fellow ought to have been

dead long ago, and the young 'un ought never to have been born."

"An admirable summing up, sir, if I may say so."

"You may say so. I tell you, Smith, I don't think there's a single prisoner that has ever come before me who deserved a sentence half as long as most of the solicitors deserve who practise in my court. Talk, talk, talk, all about nothing, just to hear the sound of their own voices. And if ever I show the slightest impatience, off they go, right off the deep end."

The clerk looked suggestively at his wrist-watch.

"You're quite right. It's time we went in. No golf, I suppose, this afternoon."

"You might get in a round or two, sir," said the clerk soothingly.

Miss Somerset was late on Monday morning. There was no time to give Choo Ling his proper attention. She hastily telephoned her solicitor to meet her outside the court, hailed a taxi, and urged the driver to do the distance in record time.

But Tom Bennett rose early, full of beans and prepared for the fray, though not so full of beans as Jack. The two started out at a brisk walk. The court was only a mile away, and a quarter of an hour would see them there. Knowing little of the habits of magistrates, Bennett arranged to be on the spot at ten. They swung round the corner at a brisk pace, and crossed to the entrance of the court just on the stroke of the hour. Then Jack, breaking into an enthusiastic run, was suddenly imperilled by the violent approach of a taxi, which swept across the opposite corner without so much as a single warning hoot. His master, disregarding personal danger, flung himself across the road, caught his pet by the collar, and threw him out of harm's way, receiving in his own shoulders the impact of the cab.

There was no real tragedy, for the driver pulled up in time to prevent his front wheel from going over the prostrate form in the road. But it was not pleasant, not at all pleasant.

Then a voice cried out, and a charming face was framed in the taxi window. Seeing what had occurred, its owner hurried out and assisted two stout policemen in their first-aid.

Bennett, lying somewhat dazed for a moment or two, returned to consciousness to find his head supported on a soft lap, and dainty jewelled hands bathing his brow with eau-de-Cologne. He decided that, in

view of the careful attention he was receiving, his duty was to relapse into a further stage of semi-consciousness. They carried him into the probation officer's room, propped him up in chairs, and sat round waiting for his revival. After a few more minutes he groaned feebly, opened his eyes, and struggled to his feet.

"Don't!" said the ministering angel. "Don't! You mustn't get up!" She pressed him gently back into the chair.

"I'm all right."

"I'm so *sorry*," said the ministering angel.

"What? Sorry I'm all right?"

"No, no. I'm *awfully* upset."

"Surely it's I who was upset."

"But it was so—so—I don't know what to say."

Bennett rose to his feet again, felt himself carefully all over, and decided that there were no bones broken, a decision which was presently corroborated by the police surgeon.

"I hope you don't think I'm in need of your official services," said Bennett to the surgeon.

"What does he mean?" whispered Miss Somerset.

The surgeon smiled. "He means to intimate that he was not drunk."

A low cry of protest and confusion.

"Oh, but please, *please*! It was my fault entirely. It was my taxi that ran him down."

"No, it wasn't."

"It *was*."

"It was *not* your fault. It was my wretched little mongrel."

At that moment the wretched little mongrel strolled in airily, with his tail up, followed by two soberly-dressed professional gentlemen, who nodded a mutual "Good morning."

"Hullo," said Bennett, "is that you, Parkin? I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me for a bit. I've been trying to knock a taxi down."

The elder of the legal gentlemen bowed to Miss Somerset.

"Good morning. I got your message. This is my friend Parkin, who is representing Mr.—Mr.——"

"Bennett," said Parkin.

Jack's owner stared. Miss Somerset stared just as hard.

"Are you——"

"I am. And are you——"

She nodded.

"Dear, dear!" said Bennett. "This is most unfortunate. And just as we were getting on so well!"

Pretty Miss Somerset blushed, and looked so much the prettier.

"We can't go on with it. Not after——"

"Of course we can't. Here's my dog. Come here, Jack! Would you like to thrash him?"

As if to add point to the offer, Jack jumped up and licked Miss Somerset's hand. She caught him up and held him to her face, which he also licked in his own comprehensive way.

"What a darling!" she cried.

"Is that darling your dog, sir?" inquired Clatworthy. "Because, if he is, I was just about to make an application to have him destroyed."

Miss Somerset turned upon him furiously. "How *can* you talk like that?"

Parkin interposed. "I think," he remarked, "that there is another darling in the case. I don't see him here, but I believe him to be a Pekingese. I was about to apply for an order for *his* destruction."

"What do you mean?" said Bennett angrily. "I *love* Pekingese."

"On your instructions, Mr. Bennett."

"Nothing of the sort!"

Clatworthy looked at Parkin, and Parkin looked at Clatworthy.

"It seems to be a case of a settlement," said the older man.

Bennett's grey eyes looked into the blue eyes of Miss Somerset.

"I think we might settle," he said.

The usher came hurrying in from court.

"His worship has taken his seat," he said.

"We are waiting for your case."

"Tell his worship to go to——"

"Golf," said Bennett. "The case isn't coming on."

The usher looked at the two solicitors.

"That is so," they said in chorus.

Back again in his private room, the magistrate sighed a happy sigh of relief.

"Smith," he said, "I don't know what's coming over people. Here are the two first sensible ones I've seen for a fortnight."

"I should think it's the spring, sir," said Smith.

AMONG THE SARSEE INDIANS OF CANADA

A COLOUR-PHOTOGRAPHY QUEST

By M. OLIVE EDIS, F.R.P.S.

Photographs by the Author

THE Indians were all out haymaking. The little white houses dotted over the Reservation, scattered as far from any arrangement of streets as possible, showed no sign of life. No smoke

two aquiline-nosed, broad-faced men were pitchforking its contents to the ground, slowly building a rick. We stopped and looked over the little fence built to guard it from the straying horses.



DRYING "JERKY" FOR THE FAMILY LARDER.

curled from the little chimneys. For miles we motored over the bumpy trail, fine in places and in others a sea of black loam. The ground was little tilled or disturbed. The rolling prairie rolled at its own sweet will, and the hand of the Red Man interfered very little. But away over the hills groups of little *tepees* came in view, where the Indian was once more at home—much more at home than inside walls provided by the paternal Government. A huge flat-bottomed cart, whose wheels seemed to run up through the floor of it, guarded by wooden arches which prevented them from becoming entangled in the hay, had just drawn up with its sweet-scented load, and

"You speak English?" asked my fellow-adventurer, Mr. Tracy Mathewson, unpacking his camera. A shake of the head was the only answer. Pause. "Then who speaks English here?"

A wave of the hand towards another little group of *tepees* just visible on the horizon barely interrupted the pitchforking. This did not look promising. Pard put his hands in his pockets and looked for the moment stumped. This scene was exactly what we wanted. *Tepees*, Indians working for themselves and not for the White Man—fine types (not too common)—in short, this was what we had come twenty miles to find and photograph.

"Well, anyway," he asserted at length, "I'm going to make your picture."

"How much?" was the instant retort.

"How much you give?"

"I'll give you a dollar."

"One dollar no good. Two man, two horse, cart—plenty picture—you give two dollar."

"How many squaws you got? I'll give you two dollars to do you and the old man and the squaws."

"No good. You make my picture, give me two dollar. Old man want two dollar, too." And so on for some time, until a bargain was struck, entirely in favour of the autocrat with the pitchfork.

Two cameras and two kodaks were then produced, and we got our money's worth. The hobbled camp-horses with their stunted canter hopped round us. One of them discovered that the seat of a reaping machine was stuffed with straw, and proceeded to pull off the sacking cover and make a meal of it. A dozen dogs of every breed known or imaginable snarled round us. Shy papooses coyly peeped at us through the flaps of tents. Invitation after invitation to sortie and be photographed resulted in the same "How much you give?" But even monetary encouragements had little attraction in this camp, for never a man or woman yielded to the lure after our haymakers had given us a turn. So, after an amusing half-hour, we packed up once more and set out on our scented homeward ride.

"This wild hay is far finer than planted stuff," volunteered our driver; "much more nourishment in it." And if the scent was any indication, it assuredly was so. The balm of the breeze in these great open lands is a haunting dream when the streets of the city close down upon us, and the breath of thousands poisons the close air. What chance have the white-faced hurrying

crowd, who stream through our tubes and undergrounds, of the joy of life which stings into the blood in the great open spaces of Canada? Oh, civilisation! great are thy products, but the joy of life in the open is surely greater here, wrested from Nature, or won living on a reservation and accepting a dole of meat and bread from the powers that



A MODERN HIAWATHA AND MINNEHAHA.

be, and working as little as possible, like our cheery black-hatted friends who greeted us with frank curiosity from the elevation of their creaking "democrats" as we passed them on the prairie trails.

A blue, blue sky and radiant sunshine pulled us out early for a trip among the Sarsee Indians next day. The air was crisp with the snap of autumn's coming, and the deep blue overhead was flecked with the

most wonderful fleecy clouds, any group of which made a picture that claimed the eye. The visibility was extraordinary, and the foothills of the Rockies, which fringed the horizon, stood out as though you could touch them, sharp and clear, in spite of the forty miles that lay between us and them.



A TALE OF DOUGHTY DEEDS OF OLD.

Gently resting over the low range of peaks lay banked-up clouds of radiant beauty, no less wonderful than the mountains themselves. Over the undulating plains we flew, the rough prairie track sending us high in air and switchbacking us till we clung to the bars of the hood. Desolate little Noah's Arks of houses stood out square and ugly in the midst of square and no less ugly

little farms. A bunch of horses and cattle strayed here and there, finding their pasture at will or slaking their thirst in the river which wound through the plains. There is none of the desolation of the flat plains here round Calgary, the constant undulations of the ground and the low bushes and

rare trees making a grateful break in the landscape. Wild duck were plentiful, clothing the surface of many a pool, and knowing no fear of us. In a few days they would be startled by the sound of a gun, and their peaceful days would be numbered; but this week we were no more to them than any comical little gopher which stood bolt upright in the roads, looking over its shoulder at us or holding conversation with another little friend who was perched a few feet away, the pair looking like nothing but a couple of sticks stuck in the ground. They quite knew the pace that motors travelled, and scattered out of our way in good time. We never killed gophers by running over them. I could not help thinking what a bad time a prehistoric gopher would have if he woke up to-day, being used to nothing faster in transit than a wheelbarrow or a "democrat." How that vehicle got its name I was unable to find out, but we met some of an almost prehistoric age.

The Sarssee Indian Reservation is fenced off from the prairies, and gates at long intervals give access to it. A good and well-beaten track led up hill and down

dale through miles of uncultivated country, full of scrubby bush and even low trees. For long we saw no sign of human life, but at last a scattered group of tiny white square houses appeared in the distance. These Indians never build in streets; they prefer their houses dotted about without rhyme or reason. The Government supply the little cottages for them, in addition to giving



A GRAND OLD STONY INDIAN.

the inhabitants a food allowance, and a British Superintendent lives at the headquarters, and superintends the farming. When at last we arrived at his residence, Mr. Gordon came up and leaned over his gate, telling us that the reason we saw no sign of life in any of the houses was that the Indians were all away haymaking, living in tents far from their little white houses.

We particularly wanted to get hold of Jim Starlight, a fine young chief who possessed a beautiful headpiece of feathers and beadwork, which promised well for a picture. But the gentleman with the poetic name was also out haymaking, and a wave of the hand was the nearest indication of his whereabouts. Having a good car, we started in chase, and very soon were met by most picturesque groups of Indians on the homeward trail. The first consisted of a democrat, which is little more than a flat cart on four low wheels, with a raised seat in front

for the driver. Two dilapidated horses drew this dilapidated thing, and the Indian who drove them wore a large Quaker hat, and had his black hair hanging in long pigtails down each shoulder.

We stopped and parleyed. Photographs of Jim Starlight taken at a previous pow-wow proved of great interest to the party, which included an old squaw, aged 103 years, but the bribe of pictures was not at all sufficient to lure them to allow us to photograph them. Dollars they wanted as well, and dollars they continued to demand in increasing quantities whilst I got out my camera. The ancient crone refused to come in on any



CARRYING THE PAPOOSE.

terms. I suppose at that age you must consider photography a very modern impertinence. Here the little unobtrusive kodak came in most effectively, the big camera meanwhile drawing the fire and the scowls. But the dollars did the work, and we packed up the richer for a truly picturesque group, of which old Tom Blue-Skies was the head and front.

We stopped later to parley with a wonderful old gentleman with fine aquiline features, his face swathed in a large emerald-green silk handkerchief surmounted by a great black felt hat with an emerald-green satin band. Of him once more we asked the way. Jim Starlight was always the wave of

scarlet cotton gown and shawl of red-and-blue tartan, was a joyful sight to a picture-maker. The men of the party were as quaint and old-fashioned, in their big black hats and long hair, as heart could wish, but again the most wonderful of them all refused to submit to the indignity of the camera, and was untempted by dollars.

The matron of the party, Big Tom's wife, was a delightfully amenable person. Spread on the ground were great pieces of sacking covered by small black Saskatoon berries drying in the sun. As she squatted over her work, rolling and turning the berries, a tiny shy little papoose, with a very grubby face and wearing an emerald-green garment,



THE "DEMOCRAT," JUST EVERYBODY'S CARRIAGE.

a hand away—perhaps three miles—and so we followed, our journey broken by chats provoked more for the pleasure of looking at the Indians than for the information likely to be gained. Breaking away from the beaten trail through open country in the direction indicated by the hand-waves, we suddenly came upon a little group of tents with four or five Indians sitting or lying round an open fire on which boiled a great black pot suspended from three crossed sticks. Tied across two of these was a cross-bar, on which hung strips of meat drying in the sunshine and in the smoke of the fire. It was a rare thing to see the old traditional "jerky" being prepared, and the charming Indian girl who crouched beside the pot, tending the fire with a big stick, and wearing a

came and nestled under the shelter of her protecting wing. She was large and portly, and wore what in the England of certain years ago we called a bustle, which added greatly to her impressiveness. Shining around her neck were bead chains of many hues, some with ends of fine beadwork, others a simple chain of colour.

After much discussion of dollars and a great deal of fun, we took a number of pictures, and once more packed up our apparatus and mounted our car, leaving the little party happy and amused. They were all very friendly. But our next discovery was, perhaps, the most delightful of the day. Seated by a group of the real old-fashioned pointed *tepees* were two old squaws busy sewing what looked like a night-



DRYING SASKATOON BERRIES.

roughly sewn with good cat-stitches, the frayed end of the material well in view. "You naughty old woman," I said, shaking my finger at her; "you have not turned in your hem."

The old crone simply rocked with laughter, covering her face with her hands in shame at having been so caught out. And so I scolded and so she laughed, we nearly pulling the sleeve in half between us.

"Now I'll turn up your bottom hem properly for you," I said, and proceeded to start the foot on better lines. She solemnly handed me a needle and cotton and a thimble, and watched with the closest attention whilst I started the hem. I discovered by signs that she made all her own clothes, and I told her I had made mine, too, and the old ladies examined them with great interest. They appeared to have an abounding sense of humour, and we thoroughly enjoyed our working party. We discovered that they were Stony Indians,



MY WORKING PARTY.

gown. They could understand little English, but there is a great human language in which it is never very difficult to make oneself understood. That, combined with a sense of humour and the almighty dollar, smooths most difficulties, and we were soon at work on the old ladies. My curiosity was roused at the garment which was in process of construction, and I went and sat down by the old ladies and examined it. I found that about four yards of rather cheap white piqué cotton had been folded in half, the sides had been sewn together, and spaces left at the top to insert sleeves. I inquired by signs where the head was to go, and one of the squaws soon had a hole cut to show me, sawn out with funny square-ended scissors. Whilst Mr. Mathewson was busy trying to get his hand into one of the said sleeves, I examined the other. Looking inside the cuff, I found that it had been turned in without hemming and very

and, like their white sisters, strongly disapproved of some of their neighbours, especially Big Tom's wife, the lady who wore the bustle. The chief ground of dislike, as far as we could make out, was that she was too big—so no good.

Away over the rolling prairies we started once more on our quest for Starlight Jim. Every Indian we met had a different idea of where he could be found, and it seemed to me a hopeless quest, perhaps because I was getting pretty hungry. A tall, thin figure on horseback, clad in a yellow knitted coat and a large grey hat, galloped by. I wished with the greatest fervour that it were the great chief we sought, when suddenly a beaming smile spread over his face, his broncho was reined in, and Starlight Jim in the flesh stood before us—young, keen-featured, and beautiful. He quickly dismounted and parleyed, his excellent English seeming oddly out of place when we were arranging for feathers and war-paint. And so a pow-wow was settled, and we parted with cheery salutations and hopes of soon meeting again. And over the plains we once more switch-backed, glad with the success of our expedition and real good luck in getting the Indians in their picturesque home life, but mighty glad, too, that we had not to partake of their meat stew with no vegetables, but had a good square British meal in front of us.

On the day appointed with Starlight Jim we set out in high hopes of a gorgeous gathering. The day was perfect, and so radiant that rain and clouds could never be thought of. We anticipated at least eight men and horses, with a few squaws thrown in, and hoped to get them to do one of their dances—a fine subject for the film which was Mr. Mathewson's object. The River Bow seemed the best setting for our plays, for the reflection of the figures in the water would give my colour plates a

great chance. So out to the Reservation we spun, over the hard grass trail, the track of which was now becoming familiar. By and by the little white houses came in view, and at length the tiny church which was our landmark. Choosing the centre track of



THE TOP-HAT WHICH ONLY THE GREATEST CHIEF MAY WEAR.

three, we flew along till we met an Indian who seemed to know where abode the Starlight Chief. As we approached the little habitation, we anxiously looked for the horses we hoped to picture. Not a sign of life could we see. We alighted and walked up to the fenced enclosure, noting the empty *tepee* and the gaily-coloured patchwork quilts hanging in the sunshine. Debating what to do, we saw a tiny papoose draw back a corner of the white Nottingham lace curtain and peep shyly at us. This was a ray of hope. Pard walked up the steps and knocked at the door and waited. A sweet-faced grey cat walked out of her little hutch beside the step and came and made love to me as my own pussy would have done. Shortly afterwards the door was opened by an Indian woman, young and intelligent-looking, and we soon found out that she could speak excellent English. Yes, she was Starlight Jim's wife. He was away with the horses. If we could wait half an hour or so, he would probably be back. Disappointed, we accepted her invitation to enter, and inveigled her into showing us some of the beadwork in which we had hoped to find our young chief arrayed. It was an astonishing display, and must have been the work of years. Every bead had been sewn by the

wife, and both design and colouring were entirely her own. Fine small round beads were used, tightly sewn down on to buckskin, and they made a firm though pliable covering. Circular plaques about fifteen inches in diameter were patterned with crossed trefoils and straight or zigzag lines. The arms and shoulder bands of Jim's buckskin shirt were ground with turquoise blue, bearing W signs made of squares or diamond blocks in red and black. Crosses and stars, as well as less conventional flowers, played a distinguished part in the designs. The gauntlets of his gloves and the backs of the hands were heavily worked, and always with the white or blue groundwork and striking figures. I exclaimed at the labour it must have cost her. "But it is so interesting!" replied this surprising lady, and smiled at me.

We made a very bad break at the beginning by calling her Squaw Starlight. "I am too much educated to be called squaw," she said, drawing herself up with dignity. "I am *Mrs. Starlight*." It cost us two hours at least. At length the beautiful youth looked in at the door. He appeared to have completely forgotten our arrangements with him, and, hiding our chagrin, we began once more all over again. But there appeared to be many difficulties in the way. The fine woollen blanket of softest texture, with its stripes of cream, red, blue, and yellow, had just been washed, and it would take at least an

hour to sew the beadwork on to it again. If we cared to wait, however, it could be fixed. So hopefully we said that we would be back in an hour and a half, and would expect to find them both arrayed; and meanwhile we went over the prairie to another little white house, where we found and induced a lady named Minnie-Sarah to don her scarlet and gold attire. Over her handsome head she bound a scarf of cerise colour, and made a truly wonderful sight. We had met her a week before in her *tepee*, very differently clad, but in any case a distinguished-looking matron. She knew little English but "two dollar," which, after some bantering, she ultimately secured, and a great deal of fun we had over it, whilst we both got to work on her. I conversed with her cheerfully in English, producing a variety of expressions on her fine old face which my partner's camera duly registered in "movie."

Then back we rode to the home of the Starlights, but for us no good stars shone. Afraid of spoiling everything by being white-manly in a hurry, we patiently waited, hoping for signs of life behind the Nottingham curtains. In ordinary circumstances we should have been sitting down to a comfortable lunch many miles away. Some chocolates and fruit which I had brought came in very conveniently to stay the pangs of hunger. "I don't want to appear a hog," said the faithful Painter (our driver), "but I do like



A FAMILY GROUP.

these candies." At length the door creaked and opened. The figure of Jim, in everyday attire, slowly emerged. My Pard groaned. "All over," he said; "we may as well go home."

But Jim had come to parley once more. By slow inference we gathered that he did not wish to go as far as the river to be photographed, and, seeing there was a clump of trees in sight which would serve for a background, we hurriedly acquiesced in his every suggestion. The little hut on the open prairie seemed a poor setting for the splendour we hoped to secure, but trees would save the situation. In five minutes the pair emerged, a truly majestic sight. Crowning their handsome heads were great head-dresses made of eagle plumes, with a border made of the soft down under the wings. The quills were bound in scarlet, and Jim's bonnet reached to his heels, the pliable binding on which

the feathers were sewn moving with every breath of wind. Over his arm he carried a long stole of beaver skins.

By cajolery we decoyed them to the chosen spot, and once there they behaved charmingly, and gave us the chance of a fine Hiawatha picture. Minnehaha was coy and melting by turns, and her mobile face reflected passing expressions which the movie camera could seize, but which baffled my colour-plates. The sun shone gaily on their gorgeous finery, and we did all we could to make the most of the moment. Then suddenly clouds piled up, and the glory of the day was over. But by faith and patience and dollars we had at last achieved, and most cheerful we felt after our day's work. But that little word "squaw" had nearly wrecked the whole proceeding, which goes to show that photography is not the *only* qualification necessary to the making of a successful photographer.



A SHEPHERD'S SONG.

OLD collie! Old collie!
Look after the sheep!
The herd in his folly
Has fallen asleep.
He dreams of the bannered
High turrets of Spain,
Of maids noble-mannered
And chill with disdain.

Old collie! Old collie!
Come, tug at his sleeve
To shake off this folly
Of fond make-believe!
He dreams not of Besses,
Nor Jills, nor sweet Prues,
But girls in silk dresses
And bright silver shoes.

Old collie! Old collie!
It's well you have done!
He wakes from his folly
And blinks at the sun.
He wonders where Jill is,
And Prue, and sweet Bess,
All roses and lilies
And neighbourliness.

Dream folly! Dream folly!
The girls in their silk
Are not half so jolly
As one at the milk.
Three maids in a dairy,
And one to be true—
But which is the fairy,
Jill, Betsy, or Prue?

WILFRID THORLEY.



"He fell to laughing at her spirit, and, barring her way, asked her name."

JACQUELINE OF THE PEACH BLOSSOMS

By MARJORIE BOWEN

Author of "Stinging Nettles," "The Viper of Milan," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

AMBROSE MORNAY cautiously crept between the bare vine poles which had just been planted in the soft newly-turned ground, jumped a low wall of red brick which separated the vineyard and the fruit garden from the flower garden, and so stood at the bottom of the lawn and terraces of the Château Mornay, looking up at that building that had been his home and, by inheritance, was his property, but which he had not seen since he had fled from the

château and the country, fled for his life in the Revolution, the first of those terrible days of blood and desolation, the first fury of that storm which had afterwards swept away king, queen, princes, nobility, as a scythe sweeps off the heads of the flowers among the corn, and had levelled with the dust the old order of things in France as a sea wave will level a sand castle built by the hands of a child.

So he had fled, he and his family, with

no more than they could carry with them, and had escaped in the boat of a fisher from the neighbouring fishing village, whose father had been one of their peasants, and so had tossed into Calais roads and finally on to the friendly coast of England. There they had lived, in exile and in poverty, but in peace.

The father had a few securities in England which brought them in a modest income, the two daughters taught the French language and the fine French embroidery learnt at the Ursuline convent. He (Ambrose) had taught fencing, and tried hard to forget the past and his bitter yearning for the old life and his own land.

Then one day he had found his elder sister in bitter, silent tears. She had only a sad mystery to offer to his eager questions, but presently he drew the truth from his mother.

Hélène was in love. What would you? She was twenty-five and beautiful. If misfortune had not happened, she would have been wedded long ago. It was another *émigré*, a young count, who made his living by his fine handwriting, copying for a great London bank. Between them they had not enough to buy a wedding-ring, and there was the tragedy. Again, what would you?

And Ambrose had suddenly revolted against exile and misfortune and poverty. Here was one woman's life blighted, and another fair girl growing up uselessly, hopelessly.

So it came that he took the price of his last series of fencing lessons, travelled to Dover in the boot of the public stage, grimly enduring discomfort, crossed the Channel in one of the English fishing fleet, and made his way along the coast to his old home.

At the tiny village near by he found the man who had rescued them three years before, and with him made a compact that he was again to be taken to England in the little fishing barque.

From this man Ambrose also gathered details of the château. It had been confiscated, of course, but who was the present owner the fisher did not know. Several deputies, members of the Committee of Public Safety and great ones of the Revolution, had stayed there for a day or two when coming down to terrorise the countryside or hunt for aristocrats or *émigrés*. The place was well kept, the fellow had added, and now Ambrose stood at the foot of the château he saw for himself that this was true.

He passed slowly behind the thick hedge of shrubs which bordered the lawn that swept in smooth green grass up to an ancient cypress, black and spreading, which stood below the terraces. It seemed to Ambrose that this was another of his exile's dreams, and that presently the scene would vanish, and the dreary houses of Red Lion Square close round him again.

The château stood on ground slightly rising, four walls and four rounded tourelles ending in delicate spires. The wide door, the green-shuttered windows, the bridge over what had once been the moat, the two formal stone terraces with the stone seats and the great vases of flowers at the top of the steps, the outbuildings, the stables, the farms beyond, with the gilded weathercock, the meadows sloping to the woods, the woods darkening into the distance—all was unchanged as it had been unchanged since the days when the château was built in the reign of King Francis I.

Ambrose had satisfied himself that the château was empty and that no one was about, but he still moved cautiously, keeping himself within the shadows of the laurels.

It was early April and intensely still. When he turned and looked behind him, he could see the ocean blue between the bare trees, low and still, melting into the paler sky, but the murmur of it was faintly in his ears and filled the air persistently as a perfume.

No trees were green save the olives which sloped down to the sea, but all had a look of life, of vitality, as if they were but waiting to break into bloom. Here and there the violets and primroses still lingered, and in the meadows blew the purple wind-flowers and the white-and-yellow clusters of the narcissi.

Ambrose drew in the air in great breaths, it was so sweet, so sweet! And it was his—his father's and *his*. Here his life had been spent, here he had meant to die. And now he was creeping back, an outcast, an exile, creeping back, like a thief, to his own!

The angry tears rushed to his eyes, his shoulders heaved. He set his teeth and hastened on towards the château. White pigeons were wheeling before it, but there was no other sign of life—no horse, no dog, no open window, no smoke from any chimney.

Ambrose came boldly out on to the terrace, and the sun met him and enclosed him in warmth like a generous embrace of

welcome. He noticed that grass grew on the terrace and before the door, that the windows were all shuttered and bolted across, and that the bolts were rusty from the sea air, as if they had been in that position for some time.

Ambrose quickly and lightly crossed the terrace and gained the right side of the château, which was in shadow. There he paused, listening. There were only two sounds—that universal murmur of the sea and the cooing of the strutting pigeons.

Through the bare trees he could see a long way to right and left, before and behind, and his eyes searched keenly. There was no one. Looking before him, a line of peach trees bordered the vine poles; the deep pink of the blossoms against the blue sea and the bare trees awakened a sudden memory that was like a pain in his heart.

A memory of such another day of peace, of stillness, of clear sunshine, a memory of a girl, bare-headed, bare-footed, in a white cotton frock, creeping in among the peach trees and breaking off branches of the blossom.

So he had found her, a daring peasant child, robbing the trees of the flowers which would become his father's fruit. If it had been a boy, Ambrose would have used the whip he carried. Even though it was a girl, his anger had flared, and he had ordered her off in angry tones.

But she had shown defiance; she had grasped the peach boughs tight against the bosom of her ragged gown and faced him. And then, because he had seen that she was more than pretty, he fell to laughing at her spirit, and, barring her way, asked her name.

"Jacqueline," she had answered hotly, staring at him, lowering and fierce, a fair thing, brown and gold, flushed and panting, with dishevelled strands of auburn hair blowing about her face, and for her back-ground the blue sea and the dark pink masses of the peach blossoms. "Jacqueline of the Peach Blossoms," he had named her in mockery, and, taking her arm, had offered to let her go with her plunder for a kiss.

She had fiercely refused, wounding his pride, and he had taken his kiss by force with a laugh that was not gentle.

How clearly he remembered now the feel of her warm, sunburnt cheek, the gesture of wrath with which she had flung down the disputed blossoms at his feet, broken away and beaten through the bushes like an angry, hunted animal.

Afterwards he had met her many times

on the sea-shore, among the olive slopes in the white street of the village, or in the meadows.

She had had no curtesy for him, though he was the heir of Mornay, and he had always had his jest of her, greeting her laughingly as "Jacqueline of the Peach Blossoms."

How long ago it all seemed now, how remote, how foolish! And yet with what painful distinctness the little incident came back as he stared at the same peach trees rosy against the same sea!

With an effort he shook the memories from him and turned to his business. Following the side of the château, he came to the window of the room he wanted—the long window of the library, which opened like a door on to the terrace.

The beating of his heart increased as, taking from their case the tools he had brought with him, he proceeded to unfasten the bolts and lift the bars which held the faded green shutter in place. The fastenings were not very elaborate nor very difficult, and he soon had the shutters swinging loose in his hands.

The tall glass windows were bolted again from the inside, but Ambrose shivered the glass, put his hand through the aperture, and slipped back the fastenings. Creaking from rust, they gave way, and Ambrose stepped into the library, behind him a stream of sunlight that showed the motes in the close atmosphere of the room.

Ambrose moved stealthily, saw that the room was empty, saw that it was much as he had left it, and leant against the wall, suddenly weak with a sense of homesickness.

Evidently there had been nothing in the library that had attracted the cupidity of the mob, nothing that roused their lust of destruction. The smooth waxed walls, the colour of dark amber, were undefaced, the portraits of dead Mornays, in ruff or whimple, armour or periwig, had been respected; they still hung in a level row above the low bookcases, and looked out, calmly smiling or calmly grave, from the dimmed gold of their frames. The very books were untouched, the Greeks and Latins, the ancient French, stood erect and well ordered. There were the desks, dark and yet shining, with their drooping handles shaped like fuchsia blossoms, the leather chairs with brass nails, the shining floor—all was well kept. Ambrose thought the place looked exactly as it had looked when he left it three years ago.

Hope sprang up brilliant in his heart. If all was untouched, then what he had come for must be untouched, too. Above the wide open hearth and beneath the antique stone mantelpiece was a long, low panel of wood deeply and finely carved with the arms of Mornay. Ambrose went to this and gently touched it with his forefinger. He had reached the end of his quest.

The scene when he had last stood on this spot was very vividly before his mind. His two sisters, clinging together and trying not to weep; from without his father's voice urging them to haste, rising out of the turmoil of fierce noises which came from the peasantry, who were attacking the château in front; his mother trying with nervous fingers to wrench back this panel behind which all the family treasures were hidden; then the bursting open of the doors, the entrance of the red-capped *sans culotte* who had discharged his pistol at the lady—there was the lead still deep-embedded in the wall behind where Madame Mornay had stood—the wild flight of all through the window into the merciful half dark which had protected them.

And now Ambrose Mornay stood again before that panel which hid, he believed, what would for ever relieve their poverty, that which would dower his sisters and give comfort to his parents and himself.

If only it had not been tampered with! On which side were the gods to-day? It was some time before he could sufficiently steady himself to touch the secret spring which was concealed in a rose of the foliated border. At last he nerved himself and put his finger on the button.

The beautiful mechanism instantly responded, the panel slid noiselessly back, and a deep cavity in the wall was visible—a deep

cavity filled with boxes, cases, bundles of papers and rolls of documents all kept fresh, dry and free from moth or rat by the steel-lined walls.

Ambrose put his hand over his heart and blessed God with tears in his eyes. First he took out all the family papers and put



them carefully into his pockets. Over the rolls of bank bills he hesitated; they were, he feared, of little use now, though amounting in face value to many thousands of livres, but there were contracts, bills of purchase, receipts, title-deeds relating to property in Spain and the East, which he eagerly seized.

Then, having disposed of these matters, he took out the caskets and boxes one at a time and placed them on the floor beside him.

The largest, a casket of dull grey satir

embroidered with seed pearls stretched over a frame of cedar-wood, he quickly opened—as all the others, it was not locked. Within, enclosed in a bag of mauve velvet, he found what he sought. The famous Mornay diamonds, the homage of a former King of France to a long-dead mistress of the château—they were all intact, strings of flashing brilliancy for neck and wrist, a star for the bosom, long pendants for the ears, all like frozen crystal with liquid gold and molten fire, the tumultuous blue of the sea, the passionate

piece into its own piece in the velvet-lined tray, old-fashioned in design and exquisite in the quality of the stones; in another was a gentleman's solitaire diamond and waistcoat buttons of jasper and topaz, together



"She with difficulty suppressed a scream and leant back against the wall."

red of live blood, the vivid green of imprisoned water flashing in their hearts and striving to be free of their white prison, all beautiful with the beauty of things eternal and unchangeable.

Ambrose put them back softly into the casket and opened the others. In one was a parure of pearls and emeralds fitting each

with shoe buckles of gold and brilliants; in another more women's ornaments of rubies sapphires, and fine silver, while a tall box of sandalwood contained all manner of rings, cameos, intaglios, cut gem and seal rings and ladies' rings of precious and sparkling stones.

There still remained in the back of the

recess several valuable sword hilts and pistols, together with some parcels of gold plate and a few articles of rock crystal. These were, however, too heavy for Ambrose to contemplate taking them with him; nor did he even dare to waste time in regrets.

Spreading his silk handkerchief on the polished floor, he emptied one casket after the other on to it, the diamonds on top of all, so that the whole gleamed like a cluster of fallen stars in the broad beam that fell from the open window.

Then, suddenly, as he was preparing to knot the handkerchief together and conceal his treasure about his person, this sunlight was obscured, and the jewels flashed more dimly in shadow.

Ambrose looked up instantly, then rose to his feet and stood erect. A woman stood in the long window. She had come so softly that only her shadow had betrayed her. She stood now with an air of softness and lightness, her hands hanging at her side, her eyes very observant.

She was dressed in a full gown the colour of sea-lavender, a hue between sharp blue and misty grey; she wore a cap of fine muslin—through which her autumn hair gleamed as sunlight behind a cloud—and an apron of silvered silk.

She was beautiful and brown and rosy, her face was thoughtful and yet gay. In her ears hung the large gold hoops loved by the peasantry. Her black latchet shoes were low enough to show a white silk stocking encasing a slender ankle.

Ambrose saw all these details as clearly as he had once seen the details of a flower through a magnifying glass. He stood bewildered, dumb, then suddenly his voice and his memory served him.

"Jacqueline of the Peach Blossoms!" he exclaimed.

She flushed deeper and her eyes darkened into a sombre brilliancy. But she said nothing. Perhaps she was trying to recall in this quiet young man, in the rather worn olive-coloured travelling suit, with the plain turned back hair and the simple neckcloth, the gorgeous young gentleman who had kissed her under the peach trees.

"What do you mean to do?" he challenged her silence.

"Ah," she answered, "what do I mean to do? This time it is I who catch the great seigneur stealing—and stealing what is more valuable than peach blossoms!"

"I take what is my own!" he flashed back.

"Nothing here is your own," she said calmly and with force. "The château belongs now to a certain Monsieur Fabre."

"And you?"

"I am his housekeeper," she replied serenely.

"He is here now?"

"Yes. He is an old gentleman, and uses a few rooms only. He never comes here; that is why I knew, when I saw the window open, that there was some thief here, Monsieur Mornay."

She still spoke with level quietness and still retained her post in the window, blocking out the sun from him. He, too, was calm, in desperation and despair.

"M. Fabre's son is in the house, too, to-day," she continued with an air of triumph, "or soon will be, and if I clap my hands or ring this"—she stepped suddenly into the room and under the long bell-rope—"he will come and deal with you."

"Are you not afraid," breathed Ambrose, "that I might wring your pretty neck, Jacqueline, first?"

"Oh, no," she mocked. "You are a great seigneur, Monsieur Mornay!"

"So you trade on that," he smiled with pallid lips, "These—these Fabres"—his tone was bitter as he spoke the name of the usurpers—"are of the people?"

She smiled with a pride equal to his own. "Yes, monsieur. The son is a great soldier—he has done much in La Vendée."

Ambrose folded his arms and leant back against the wall. "The Revolution has changed you," he remarked, glancing at her from head to foot; "you have flourished in these years of liberty."

She gave him look for look. "You, too, have changed."

"I know. Does it please you? You have a pretty face, but a vulgar little heart, I doubt not." So said he in his wrath and bitterness.

Her blush deepened again, but she answered quietly: "Oh, I have my revenge! You humiliated me when I was a silly child, and now I humiliate you."

Ambrose answered gravely: "Nay, you do not humiliate me. You find me taking what is my own, what I have great and pressing need of."

Her eyes flickered to the bell-rope.

"Oh, ring!" said Ambrose. "Ring, my child, and let us end this foolish conversation. What will your master do with me, eh?"

"Shoot you in the ditch," she replied.

"Oh, yes, and bury you like a dog, of course. Oh, yes! Say your prayers, Monsieur Mornay!" And she stamped her foot in some kind of fury. "Why do you think me so hateful?" she suddenly demanded. "Once you thought I was too mean to refuse your kiss, and now you think I am too mean to be anything but your executioner."

He thought, perhaps, she might want his entreaties, his flatteries, but it was not in him to give her those. "I think you will serve your own kind," he replied coldly. "Why do you not ring?"

For reply, she picked up the handkerchief full of jewels. Casting it on the desk beside her, she picked up the ornaments one at a time and, gazing at them, she gave a mocking laugh.

"So you had your secret treasures there all the time. Who is the lady whose charms have driven you to this dangerous enterprise, Monsieur Mornay?"

"Oh, Jacqueline, little Jacqueline," he answered, "because I once kissed you against your will——"

"You are bold to remind me of it!" cried she, flaming.

"—must you insult me when I am at your mercy, you poor, silly child? I wanted the jewels to redeem us from poverty and, most of all, to dower my dear sister. Now they will adorn the neck of this upstart's wife, and I had rather that they had been flung into the sea. As for the papers they will find on me afterwards, I pray you, for charity, ask them to burn them or fling them with me in the ditch, for I know it is useless to ask you to send them to my parents."

She did not reply; she bent her head and, crossing the room, stooped and picked up all the empty caskets, flung them into the secret recess, and drew the sliding panel into place. Then she returned to the handkerchief of jewels and knotted the four corners of the silk together crossways, like a peasant's bundle.

"Those are her spoils," he thought; "she will not share them."

Jacqueline had hardly drawn the last knot tight before the door was rather violently opened and a tall man stepped into the apartment.

The girl seemed more surprised than Ambrose; she with difficulty suppressed a scream, and leant back against the wall, her face suddenly frightened. Ambrose stood quite still, quite colourless, quite fearless.

The newcomer was handsome in a dark, heavy fashion, and richly, though plainly, dressed. Ambrose at once guessed him to be the son of the present owner of the château.

"What is this?" he cried, glancing from one to the other. "I heard voices. I know there should be no one here. What is it, eh, Jacqueline?"

She came forward. "Chut!" she cried. "You frightened me! I thought you were out."

"Nay, I am here, as you see," he answered keenly.

"Well," said Jacqueline, "I suppose you will be angry."

She looked straightly at the man who was waiting to hear his death sentence from her lips. Not the least sign of dread nor terror, agitation nor fear, did Ambrose Mornay show. He stood completely at his ease, a man in his own house. He glanced once sideways out of the broken window at the peach trees, and he smiled a little ironically at a memory. The other man waited.

"Oh, how grim you look!" cried Jacqueline. "What do you think I have to tell you? This fellow is one of those strolling pedlars who are always coming, and whom you forbade me to see. These are his samples"—she calmly held up the handkerchief of jewels—"and—oh, what is a girl to do who never sees Paris? I let him in here, thinking you would not find us."

Ambrose felt suddenly sick and giddy, the branches of the distant peach blossoms danced madly before his eyes. Now she had given him his life, or a chance of life, he knew how terrible had been the near approach of death.

"And the broken window?" asked the other man.

"Why, the shutter was rusty and I was in a hurry, and so it broke, Monsieur Fabre." Jacqueline shrugged her shoulders. She turned to Ambrose. "And now you had better go, fellow; your goods are too dear, and you are getting me into trouble with my master."

Ambrose rallied. "Although you have purchased nothing," he said, with a very low bow, "I shall never forget my kind reception here. I pray for our future meeting."

"Perhaps we shall," she said carelessly. "But do not come here again, friend, for we are strictly kept."

"Let me see the samples," demanded M. Fabre quietly.

"No," answered Jacqueline. "If we once untie his bundles, we must buy."

"Perhaps I might buy you a fairing, Jacqueline."

She faced him straightly. "There is nothing there I care for," she said, and handed the handkerchief to Ambrose. He was still giddy, still dazed as he took it from her. He picked up his hat and cloak, gave her one look as he uttered his conventional farewells, and was gone through the broken window.

Man and girl stood silent, watching his figure disappear across the terraces. It was the man who spoke first.

"That was young Mornay. Why did you let him go?"

She paled but smiled. "For honour's sake."

"Why did you lie to me? Did you think I believed that foolish story?"

"At least it served."

"Why was he here?"

"He had some family treasures hidden here," answered Jacqueline. "He needed them—they are poor."

"So am I," said M. Fabre grimly.

"Ah, you do not need money!" she flashed.

"I might want jewels."

"Why?"

"For the wife I may marry."

"Your wife," said Jacqueline, "will only want the jewels you can earn for her yourself, monsieur."

He stepped forward suddenly and caught her by the shoulders. "Do you know that I love you?" he asked.

"Yes," said Jacqueline, bravely holding up her face.

"Why did you let him go?" he asked passionately.

"Listen! In the old days he caught me

stealing peach blossoms. Before he let me go he kissed me against my will. I hated him. Then he named me 'Jacqueline of the Peach Blossoms.' People took that name for me. When you took the château you heard it and liked it, and sought me out for your servant, and it was under the peach trees we met, the first time a year ago—do you remember?—when I was coming up to the château, with my bundle, to be your servant. And after a little I no longer hated the man who had given me the name you liked. Do you understand? I owed him something—I paid that debt to-day."

At the end of her breathless recital she drooped her flushed face, and to kiss left only the muslin cap that veiled the gleaming hair.

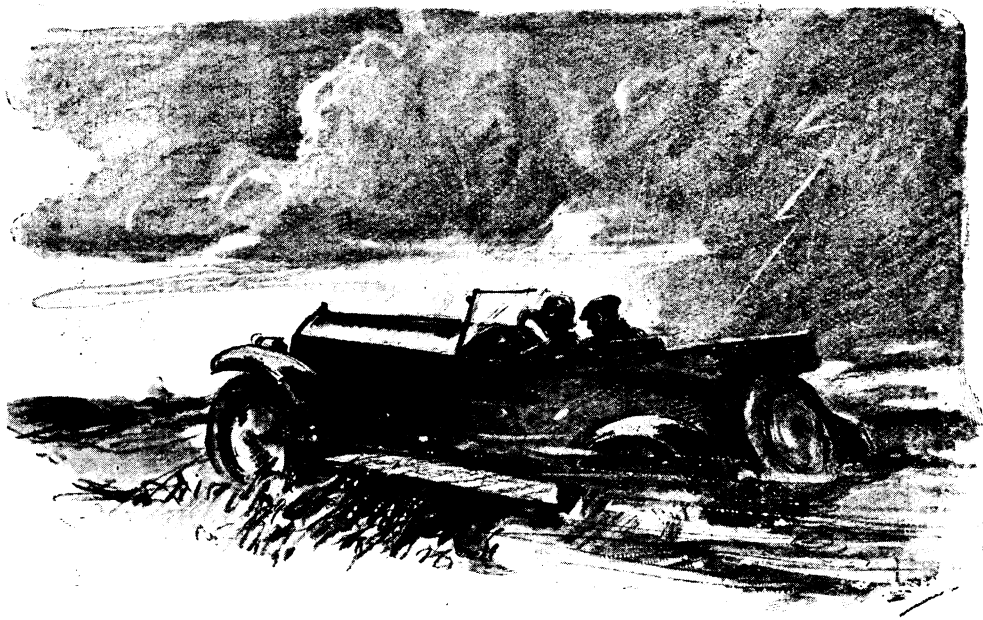
"Oh, sweet," he said, "I love you so!" And after a little he added: "But if I had not loved you, I should never have let you fool me!"

"Ah, Charles," she answered shyly, looking up and lifting her face, "had I not known that you loved me, I should never have tried!"

* * * * *

In after-times the château returned to the possession of the Mornay family, and Ambrose Mornay lived there with an English bride who wore his mother's jewels; but the finest of the Mornay diamonds sparkled on the throat of Madame Fabre, a wedding gift from him who had named her "Jacqueline of the Peach Blossoms." And when her husband was one of the famous generals of the First Empire, he often brought her to the Château Mornay to visit her friends, the lord and chatelaine, and his two sisters happily wed, and to see the little fruit trees that every year renewed youth and beauty and memories as deep as love.





"Mr. Champness drove the uncovered car, through the torrents of rain and the swift lightning."

ALL ABROAD

By W. PETT RIDGE

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

MR. CHAMPNESS came out of the Hotel du Havre, looked up and down the river front, made urgent inquiries of the proprietor. The bell had gone for lunch, and it was not usual for his pupil to be late for this or for any meal.

"Miss Hinton! I say! Hullo there!" Mr. Champness called up through the din of traffic to the terrace of the hotel next door; the lady addressed was making her selection of shrimps, anchovies, olives and sardines offered by a waitress. From the edge of the pavement he shouted again, and this time a smile of recognition was obtained. "Seen anything of Ellaby?"

"Certainly I will," she answered, with cheerfulness, "unless you can get anyone else to play the accompaniment."

"I say," he repeated, with both hands forming a megaphone, "have you seen—anything—of young Ellaby?"

"I visited the ruins once," she said, "but I'm quite willing to go again."

He gave an ejaculation of despair at the

stupidity of the sex to which he did not belong, and, going through the entrance to the courtyard, ran up the staircase, made his way, with apologies, through the dining-room, to the terrace. Miss Hinton listened to the somewhat aggressive and heated repetition of the inquiry.

"So sorry!" she declared. "At first I thought you were asking about 'Songs of Araby,' and then it sounded as though you were inviting me to go to Jumièges. These motor-cars make such a clatter as they go through!" Miss Hinton gave a brief lecture on the habits and customs of the country.

"You have not yet answered my question. Don't be evasive, please."

"I saw Mr. Ellaby yesterday evening. With you."

"Obviously that information is in no way useful. Where is your niece? I say, where is your niece? Give me a plain answer, please—yes or no."

"You are spoiling my meal, Mr. Champness, and that is something for which I can

never forgive you. But if you must know, Barbara asked my permission to go to Rouen for the day."

Mr. Champness frowned so determinedly that his pince-nez fell off, selecting a round pat of butter as a point of least resistance. He went, cleaning the glasses with his handkerchief, and sustained three collisions in the dining-room. At his own hotel he complained very strongly of the dishes offered, flouting the proprietor's arguments, and declaring that absence of previous criticism regarding similar food in no way implied satisfaction. The meal over, he went again to his pupil's room and found it still empty; he searched the narrow streets near the church, and took once more a survey of the river front. An American artist of his acquaintance landed from the steam ferry.

"Why, yes, Mr. Champness, I saw him not more than an hour since, before I went across. He told me he was going away for a round of golf."

"A mere subterfuge!" cried Champness distractedly. "The point is, where have they really gone?"

"They?"

"The girl spoke about Rouen, and the boy talked of Dieppe. Now, the one clear fact is, of course, that these are not their real destinations."

"Mr. Champness, you are beginning to interest me. Do I understand that your young friend and that remarkably pretty girl at the Hotel de la Marine have gone off together? Say," exclaimed the American artist delightedly, "this is where I come in! This is what I'm good at. This and baseball are the two games I play. Come over here for coffee, and let's figure it all out."

A reserved man hitherto, the American now pulled up the flood-gates and allowed eloquence to swirl through. Within five minutes he had persuaded Mr. Champness that the young couple had gone to Havre. At Havre there was an English consul, qualified to perform the ceremony of marriage; neither, debating this across a round white table, knew the preliminaries required, but Mr. Champness thought it unlikely that a young man and a young woman could walk into the office and say: "Here we are! Marry us as quickly as you can." Something in the form of notice would be demanded. Witnesses would surely be necessary.

"But I must get there as quickly as possible," said Champness.

"My car is at your disposal."

"Wouldn't the train be quicker?"

"The train?" echoed the American.

"Snails travel by that train, sir, when they want to go slowly."

Miss Hinton strolled across as the car arrived. Its owner had prepared for the journey, but Mr. Champness, with no ceremony, borrowed his coat and goggles, announced himself as well capable of driving, and ordered the American to put in a good afternoon's work at the easel.

"Going for a trip?" asked Miss Hinton. Champness was examining the stock of petrol, and he offered only a grunt for reply. "You'll find it rather warm."

"If I don't," he snapped, "I shall make it so."

"How very strange you are to-day! I can't understand you at all."

"The point is," he said, with one foot on the step, "that I understand you. Your scheme, Miss Hinton, has been well thought out, but it's my business to see that it isn't carried into practice. I am now going to Havre to stop the marriage of my pupil and your niece."

"I'm coming with you," she said readily.

A small crowd assembled to hear the argument, and folk leaned out from windows. The American artist managed to give a word of advice; Miss Hinton stepped in. Mr. Champness started the car, and the crowd made way. As the car took the straight road by the side of the river, Miss Hinton closed her parasol, threw it to the seats at the back, and wound a blue veil about her head. "Rather sit behind?" asked Champness gruffly. She answered that she was quite comfortable. They reached Villequier without exchanging any other words. He obeyed the painted request to slacken speed; received the thanks given by signboard at the other end of the village.

"You drive well."

"Don't make silly remarks," he begged exasperatedly, "just for the sake of talking. I'd rather you didn't speak at all."

"Yesterday evening," said Miss Hinton, "you were kind enough to pay me a compliment on the intelligence of my conversation."

"I didn't know then what you were capable of doing."

"Do you really imagine," she asked, "that I have done anything to encourage this affair? Do you think I am responsible in any way?"

"I have been a coach now for a good many years, and I am fully capable of putting two and two together."

"What do you make the answer?"

"Here is a young man of property entrusted to my charge," argued Champness heatedly, "and here is a young woman entrusted to your charge. My duty is to get him ready for an examination in September; your duty, I take it, is to get her well married and off your hands. In the absence of direct evidence, we have to consider motives, and the——"

"Look out!"

He swerved the car, and just escaped contact with another that came out of a narrow road at right angles.

"You were in the wrong there," she mentioned. "They sounded the horn, and you didn't. Any commendation I gave to your driving is hereby withdrawn. Try to be more careful in future. An accident in which our two names were coupled would afford me no satisfaction."

"I am glad," he remarked, "to discover that you draw the line somewhere."

Miss Hinton contented herself, after this, in ejaculating the names of some of the villages and towns as they went through: Lillebonne (with a wave of the hand at the Roman amphitheatre), St. Romain, Harfleur. They pulled up in the Rue de Paris at Havre, where an announcement of "Five o'clock Tea" caught their eyes simultaneously; he invited her with a jerk of the head, and she accepted with a curt nod. At the table silence was preserved until Champness searched his pockets in order to settle the bill.

"Have you—have you, by chance, money on you?" he stammered.

"Plenty," she answered, exhibiting a note-case.

"I haven't a centime. Forgot all about it, to tell the truth. Shall I take charge of——"

"No," said Miss Hinton, "I'll keep it myself."

"I only offered because it seemed to contain rather a lot of money."

"Often, during my life," said Miss Hinton, "I have found a lot of money to be useful. I suppose the time will come when I shall have to leave all I possess to someone else, but meanwhile I rather enjoy spending it at the rate of about three thousand a year."

He repeated the figures in tones of amazement. "I had really no idea," he declared,

"from the way you and your niece lived at Caudebec, that you were people of so much importance. What do you think I earn? Altogether, I mean, including the articles I write for the magazines and the trifling amounts I get for my verses—how much a year?"

"I am too well bred," smiled Miss Hinton, "to guess, and too much of a woman not to want to know."

He scribbled on a slip of paper and passed it across the table. "That is precisely what I fetch in the open market."

"Your poetry," she said, leaning forward interestedly, "is it any good?"

It happened that Champness had in his hip pocket an envelope containing several printed specimens, and these were submitted with explanatory remarks. "This is rather neat, I think," and, "That I wrote once at Rapallo," and "This is not quite up to my mark, but they used it." At the end Miss Hinton, in paying the account, mentioned that she had always been under the impression that poets wrote mainly on the subject of love; Champness answered that the topic was one which had engaged but little of his attention, and, remarking that there appeared to be thunder in the air, suggested they should now see to the business which had brought them to the town. They found the English Consul had left five minutes earlier; the clerk in charge of the office was able to say, of his own knowledge, no marriage had that day taken place; he explained the regulations affecting ceremonies of the kind. A fortnight's notice had to be given by the parties. The notice was required to be posted up in the office for that period. No marriage after three o'clock in the afternoon. Total cost to the gentleman, three pounds five shillings. The storm outside broke as the information was being given, and the clerk made something like a sworn affidavit to the effect that he had prophesied its arrival throughout the whole of the day.

Mr. Champness drove the uncovered car, through the torrents of rain and the swift lightning, to an hotel that he had noticed on the way from the tea-rooms. His companion wore the heavy travelling coat, and this, with its deep collar, protected her; Champness himself was only partially shielded by the glass screen, and the head waiter, receiving them in the courtyard, insisted—Miss Hinton supporting the resolution in eloquent terms—that the jacket and waistcoat should be taken away to undergo

a process of drying. The head waiter found a dressing-gown, and made a useful recommendation in favour of dinner in a private room.

"Sure you are all right?" demanded Champness concernedly. "I can't blame myself sufficiently for bringing you on this wild-goose chase."

"If you remember, I insisted upon coming."

"Let me take all the blame," he urged.

He regarded himself in the mirror. A maid at the doorway announced that Madame's room was ready. "I say," remarked Champness alarmedly, "shall we really have to stay here all night?"

"Are you thinking," asked Miss Hinton, preparing to follow the maid, "of your reputation or the expense?"

"Both!" he answered.

He secured quite a good round of applause by an

effective entrance in the hall, and by demanding the use of the telephone; the combination of his odd appearance and this order seemed to be welcomed by residents of the hotel, kept in by stress of weather. Apparently they knew, as he discovered a few minutes later, that in France the means of communication are suspended during a thunderstorm. He returned to give the announcement, and the time of waiting for his companion was occupied by self-communings that he did not trouble to put into the form of rhythm or rhyme.

Miss Hinton, as keeper of the purse, had given orders for the meal. It proved an excellent dinner, and not for the first time in the world's history food succeeded in changing a man's views. Champness, at the dessert, declared that if he could be informed of the safety of his pupil, the whole matter would



"The rain has stopped, I think. Do you feel capable of driving home?"

present itself in the light of an admirable joke; Miss Hinton trusted her niece was not out in the storm.

"Tell me something," he begged, tendering the black cherries.

"Put the question."

"Had you any idea they meant to go off together?"

"I thought you were quite certain on that point, judging from the remark you made when we were leaving in the car."

"I may," admitted Champness, "have done you an injustice."

"As a matter of fact, you did. My niece is an intelligent girl, and your pupil—if you don't mind me saying so—is not too well furnished with mental

ability. In spite of your efforts, he is quite a fool. If you had not been under the mistaken impression that I was a hard-up woman, taking my niece about for the purpose of making a good marriage for her, and if you had not allowed



"With your help. Would you mind paying for the dinner? I'll settle with you when we reach Caudebec."

yourself to be influenced by your American friend, you would have seen there was every reason why I should strongly object to a marriage."

"I know you better now, dear."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I say," he repeated, with confusion, "that I know you better now."

"Thought," remarked Miss Hinton, "that you added something else. The rain has stopped, I think. Do you feel capable of driving home?"

"With your help," he said deferentially. "Would you mind paying for the dinner? I'll settle with you when we reach Caudebec."

The head waiter was desolated to find Monsieur and Madame intended to depart, and urged several reasons against this course. A ten-franc note—"Too much!" whispered Champness—induced him to withdraw these, to restore the dried jacket and waistcoat, and to see the two off with best wishes for a good journey. The moon had come out; Champness remembered the way, and when two hours later they saw the lights of the town, and the broad river that gave it company, they said in unison, with regretful accents: "Why, we're here

already!" The owner of the car was in the centre of the roadway.

"Say, now," he cried jovially, "what do you think you two sparks are up to? Is this the way to treat a friend who lends you his automobile for a spin? I'd almost decided to put the police on your track."

"Any news of the young couple?" demanded Champness anxiously.

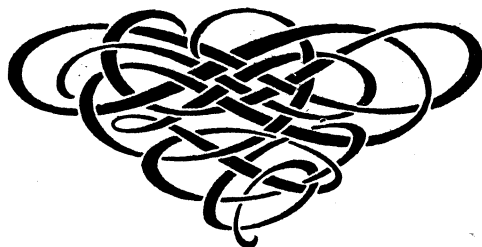
"He came back from Dieppe at six o'clock, and she was home from Rouen some time before that. He has gone to bed because he is tired after his day of golf, and she is waiting up to find out what on earth has become of her respected aunt!"

* * * * *
Mr. Champness met Miss Hinton the following morning, in the Rue de la Boucherie, a street so narrow as to give folk an excuse for stopping to talk.

"Been thinking about those fees the consul charges," he said. "They seem really quite moderate."

"Do you believe you could afford the outlay?"

"I'll save up, dearest!" Mr. Champness, on this occasion, gave the last word with good elocutionary power.



GIPSIES ALL.

OLD carts heaped up with tarpaulin and blackened stakes;
Pails and kettles clattering to and fro;
Ponies, mongrels, brown-faced women and men—
So down the moorland road the gipsies go.

They have left behind on the moor a trampled place
Squalid with cinder and shards and a refuse-pile—
A place where, threaded and pierced by needles of furze,
Tatters and rags the gold of the gorse defile.

Well, we are gipsies all, and we move our tents
From one life-phase to another. We cannot build—
We must always travel and camp, and we leave behind
The tatters and shards of ambitions unfulfilled.

SYDNEY SNELL.



“How—oh, how could you do it?” he said reproachfully.”

THE MEDAL ROUND

By HUTTON MITCHELL

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

DOCTOR SPARLING arranged his glasses and looked up at his patient with a tolerant smile on his cheery face.

“Now, look here, Marriott,” he said severely, “you’ve worked hard, you’ve made money, and you’ve built up a splendid business—at a cost. You are thirty-eight. You’ve drawn heavy drafts on your vitality, narrowed your interests in life, and failed in your responsibility to the physical side of yourself. Work’s a fine thing, but—a little play is necessary at times. Now, as the bankers say, the bill is presented and must be met.”

The men were old friends, and the customary *convenances* of the consulting-room unnecessary between them.

“And you advise?”

“Well, there’s nothing organically wrong, you know. You want to give yourself a long holiday—three months at least. No, don’t protest; you’ve got a splendid manager in young Wainwright, and the business—as you’ve often told me yourself—can go on automatically in your absence. Go away. Take up some game—golf, for instance.”

“My dear Sparling, I don’t know a club from a caddie. Besides, you know——”

“Yes, I know. It spoils an otherwise good walk; it’s an old man’s game; marbles entail less time and expenditure, and so on. All rot, my boy. You’ll watch your handicap coming down with far more interest than you ever watched the ‘ticker’ in Mincing Lane. You’ll feel as fit as the proverbial fiddle in less than no time at all, and have an interest in life strong enough to take you away an hour or two sooner each night from the office, which, as the Yankees say, will be all to the good.”

“But, hang it all, man, can’t you suggest something else? Golf of all things! Isn’t there some other game a fellow——”

“It’s the finest game going, and entirely suitable to you. You’ll pick it up in no time, too. Why, ten years ago, my dear fellow, I’d never seen a golf club, and to-day”—Doctor Sparling braced his shoulders and patted himself proudly on the chest—“to-day, this morning, Jephson looked in and told me my handicap has been brought down to eighteen! Said he saw it posted up himself at the club-house.”

The information conveyed was all Greek

to Gerald Marriott, but he gathered from the fact that Sparling pulled his coat-collar higher, projected an extra inch of cuff below his coat-sleeves, and glanced approvingly at his reflection in the large mirror hanging on the wall, that epoch-making forces had been at work in his friend's life.

"Down to eighteen, my boy!"

Gerald admitted somewhat doubtfully that it sounded well, and the two men shook hands.

A week later Gerald Marriott, dejected, carrying a bag of golf clubs that weighed something over a ton, and dressed in a suit which would have certainly created consternation in Mincing Lane, lumbered heavily on to the course of the Royal Southbourne Club at Southbourne.

After signing his name in the visitor's book and paying the extravagant fees demanded by so exclusive a club as the Royal Southbourne, he wandered somewhat aimlessly towards the first tee and, depositing his bag beside the tee-box, took the first club that came to his hand, placed a brand-new Silver King on a little heap of sand, and smote valiantly at a patch of turf a yard or so behind the ball.

The professional, after watching him for some time in utter amazement, approached and pointed out that although certain innovations might be desirable to the existing rules, the real idea of the game—as it stood at the moment—did not include the removal of the turf to the neighbouring county, nor had the erection of bunkers in the middle of the greens been as yet definitely sanctioned by the committee of the club.

Depressed but persistent, Gerald pursued the uneven tenor of his way. He was not to be shaken from his purpose by either sarcasm or pity. His mind was made up. He would play golf—sooner or later. He would not be beaten.

His annoyance at the wit employed by the professional prevented him from hiring that individual to give him a lesson, as he had at first intended. So that his pleasure was marked and obvious when a young fair-haired lad of eighteen or little more strolled up and courteously explained the various uses of the clubs.

"I'll go round with you, if you'd like me to," he said, "and explain as we go. You'll learn better that way. My sister was going round with me this morning, but an aunt called, so that's off."

He was a nice boy, and when he informed

Gerald that he was going up to Balliol next term, Gerald, on the principle that one good turn deserves another, gave him an introduction to a nephew in the same college.

"It's useful to know someone who knows the ropes," he explained. "Young Fred can put you on to things quickly and save you no end of a bother."

Gerald's performance was something of a trial to the fair-haired lad, who secretly decided to give him a wide berth for the future. The youth's politeness, however, never wavered. He smiled faintly when a club, loosely held by Gerald, whizzed an infinitesimal fraction of an inch past his ear, and deprecatingly pooh-poohed the suggestion that he was hurt when a drive—sliced at an altogether impossible angle—took him sharply on the chest.

"He's an awfully decent old scout," he explained later to his sister, "and quite good-looking, but, by Jove, I never saw play like it in my life! He did jolly well everything but murder me outright."

"Everyone has to learn," his sister consoled him.

The fourth day was Medal Day, and it was while Gerald was standing near the first tee, "picking up pointers," as he phrased it to himself, that he saw the fair-haired youth, accompanied by a very pretty girl, arrive on the scene. Both carried golf bags, but whereas the girl left hers at the club house, the fair-haired youth brought his up to the tee and looked round expectantly. His eye fell on Gerald. He smiled and advanced towards him.

"Playing in the medal round?" inquired Gerald.

"Yes, my partner said he'd meet me here. He's scratch; I'm two. By the way, here's my sister; let me introduce you."

The introduction told him that the girl's name was Gwen Mannington. Common-place, perhaps, but it sounded like music in Gerald's ears. He scanned her closely. No one would have taken them for brother and sister. Oswald—that was the boy's name—was tall and fair, while Gwen was slight, rounded, and dark. An outdoor girl, so much was evident in the dusky tan of her face, in the easy swing and poise of her perfectly-proportioned body, in the careless freedom of her every action.

The full force of Sparling's remark came to him as he looked at her: "Work's a fine thing, but a little play is necessary at times."

"I'm awfully pleased your brother spoke to me again," he said to her. "I hardly thought he would, you know."

"Why?" inquired Miss Mannington curiously.

"Well, you—er—you see, I nearly killed him on my first day. I'd never played before, and of course I made a frightful hash of it."

The play had begun, and almost unconsciously they had turned away from the course and were walking slowly in the direction of the sandhills that lie to the west of Southbourne. "I've been in an office most of my time, you see, in London. I've had no chance really to learn."

"But there are lots of courses round London, aren't there?"

"Yes, I suppose so; but I have always seemed to be too busy to do anything in the sports line."

"And now?"

"Now—well, now my doctor, an old friend, advised a change, a rest for a time, and suggested golf as a cure for my ills, whatever they are. So I came here. 'Sea, Golf, and Fishing,' the advertisement said. But—I don't think I'll ever make a golfer," he added sadly.

"Everyone has to learn," said Miss Mannington hopefully.

The acquaintanceship between them ripened rapidly, and when, a week later, Oswald "went up," they drew more and more together. Gerald had never been in love before, but he found no difficulty whatever in recognising that it—this—was the real thing.

Since the day he had first made her acquaintance, he had, fearing to appear ridiculous in her eyes, discontinued altogether his attempt to learn golf. It was all very well to be an object of amusement to the loungers who frequented the course and the club-house, but it became another matter when the girl of one's heart was looking on. Yet the thing rankled within him. He hated to give in, to be beaten, a fact more than one of his rivals in the City had recognised to their cost in the past. So that he was both pleased and taken aback when, one morning, returning with Gwen from a long walk over the sandhills, she suddenly said:

"You're not making much progress with your golf, Mr Marriott?"

"N-no," he stammered. "Fact is, I'm a duffer. And—and——" Whatever he was about to say was cut short by Gwen,

who, with a slightly embarrassed air, and turning her glance seaward, remarked:

"I've been thinking we might have a game early in the morning—to-morrow morning, if you like—before anyone comes. It seems a shame not to. Your holiday can't last for ever, and——"

"I'd love to! Only you understand——"

"At six, then, to-morrow. We'll go round before breakfast." She held out a cool little hand as she spoke. "I must go now; it's nearly lunch-time. Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

Gerald waited until she was out of sight, then gave a whoop of joy that set a flock of seagulls screaming high into the air.

"It's a great game—golf!" he remarked sagely.

He bribed the professional that evening to give him a few tips, and that long-suffering individual stood appalled at the havoc Gerald wrought during the round. He pulled, sliced, topped, and, in fact, did everything he ought not to have done—everything the beginner generally does—only, as the pro. reflected, much worse than anything he had ever seen.

"You want one more stroke for your century," he said encouragingly, as they approached the short ninth, "and there's only one ball left fit to play with. Shall we go on?"

"Rather!" returned Gerald with enthusiasm.

At six the following morning his courage waned somewhat as he saw Gwen approaching, sun-kissed and wind-blown, carrying her clubs with the tilt and air of a practised hand.

His humiliation was about to begin. There was no question of the fact, in his mind, that the sister of Oswald Mannington could be other than a practised and skilful player, and he had no delusions as to the futility of his own efforts to master the game.

Indeed, the game took a secondary consideration as she drew nearer. The faint flush on her cheeks, the parted lips and sparkling eyes, the alluring tendrils of dark hair that framed her piquant face, the grace and easy poise of limb and body, the subtle clinging suggestiveness of girlhood, together made a picture that for a moment held him spellbound and speechless.

His heart leapt with joy, as, having teed her ball with great care, she made a mighty swipe, topping it.

"Well, I'm dashed!" she gasped, watching it as it trickled slowly away a couple of yards or so from the tee.

Greatly encouraged, Gerald gripped his

"I hit it sometimes," he observed modestly.

Sometimes was right. For the rest of the round he found his old form. He took



"Miss Mannington is playing miles below her handicap."

driver and prepared for action. His stance and the way he addressed the ball would have made the experts at St. Andrews shed bitter tears for the incompetence of "Southern gowf." The club whistled through the air in a joyous ecstasy and—hit the ball fairly in the centre.

It was Gerald's turn to gasp.

"A hundred and fifty yards at least!" cried Gwen. "Oh, Gerald, and you said you had never played before!"

Gerald marked the "Gerald"—also the flight of the ball—with considerable joy and surprise.

twelve for the first, ten for the second, and reached the turn with the rather unassuming figure of eighty-two. But even so Gwen was three strokes worse, and two down; and Gerald started the second half feeling distinctly pleased with himself.

His fine nature asserted itself, however, at the fourteenth—where he stood three up—and he determined to let Gwen beat him. It required a mighty sacrifice on his part, but love, he reflected, was not love without sacrifice and concession.

Gwen, however, promptly took him to task "You're not trying," she said severely.

"I shan't play if you don't go all out to win." A choked sound, savouring of a sob to Gerald's ears, came from her lips. "I'm not a baby; I don't mind being beaten a bit."

They stopped at the sixteenth to enable Gerald to put his arms about her and kiss away the tear—the result of anguish or secret mirth he knew not—that rested on her cheek.

"I love you, darling," he said. "You're the only woman—the only one person in all the world that——"

many accomplishments, and entreated her to say which day and month—not to exceed two weeks at most from the present date—would suit her best.

"Old Sparling knew something," he thought, when he kissed her that night on leaving her mother's house. "It's the finest game that was ever invented."

It comforted him, too, to reflect that if he were not a Cyril Tolly, Gwen at least was not a Joyce Wethered. They would learn golf together, and if it should happen that he acquired the game the quicker of the two, he would carefully conceal the fact from her. Love, the traitor, was already demanding sacrifice and abnegation from his votary.

It was the day before he went back to Town, however, that he realised how great love's sacrifice can be. It was the Ladies'



"Gerald's amazement grew as Gwen went right away."

"You can beat at golf," she said, her eyes shining happily.

He kissed her again, with a masterful air that proclaimed golf to be only one of his

Medal Day, and, knowing that Gwen was down to play, he determined to be present and lend her what moral support he could in the circumstances.

Beaten she must be, almost certainly so, but she would at least have the knowledge that *his* eyes were sympathetic and that *his* arms were waiting for her.

She began splendidly, however. The gods, seemingly, were with her. At the first tee her club struck the ball hard and true, with the sharp clear click sweeter to the golf ear than is a Chopin nocturne to the musical enthusiast. The ball kept low and straight and, pitching a good hundred and fifty, came to a standstill some two hundred and thirty yards away in the centre of the fairway. A wonderful shot.

Gerald's amazement grew as Gwen went right away, her driving, approaching, and putting being a revelation to him, although to the crowd following it seemed to create no particular astonishment. A hot flush ran down his spine at the long tenth, when one of the accompanying enthusiasts remarked with a smile: "Miss Mannington is playing miles below her handicap. The

medal's a gift for her." He was a jolly old chap who spoke, and Gerald felt constrained to speak to him.

"What is Miss Mannington's handicap, sir?" he inquired.

"One," replied the enthusiast. "And to my mind she's a cert. for next year's Ladies' 'Open.' A great player, sir."

Gerald retired, thoughtful.

It was on the way back, when they had left the crowd and the course a long way behind, that he turned to her.

"How—oh, how could you do it?" he said reproachfully. "How——"

She nestled close to his free shoulder—her golf bag was over the other—and pressed her lips close to his ear.

"Because——" she began, and faltered.

The look in her eyes told him the rest. He let the bag drop with a rattle to the ground and took her in his arms.

"It's a great game—golf, darling!" he said, smiling.

DOWN GOBLIN LANE.

DOWN Goblin Lane, when twilight falls,
The lads and lassies hurry quick;
They start aside when grey owl calls
Or glimmers, ghost-like, from a rick;
They linger not near brook or glade,
They scuttle past the old red oast.
When home, their friends ask, "Who's afraid
To meet a ghost?"

Down Goblin Lane, when daylight dies,
Old wives go hobbling quickly home;
To cross the bridge they shut their eyes
Tightly where wintry waters foam,
Lest dizziness their steps delay
From waiting kettle, tea and toast;
They're not the least bit scared, not they,
To meet the ghost.

Down Goblin Lane, when night wings flap—
Flittermouse? Raven on twisted tree?
The Rector's feet go slip-slip-slap
Shuffling, for much galoshed is he;
Why does he sing a hymn of praise
So loud you'd think he were a host?
He says he'd like, one of these days,
To meet a ghost.

R. B. INCE.



SUITING THE WORD TO THE ACTION.

"Yes, that's the 'camel walk,' a variation of the two-step!"
 "Really? I should have called it a 'zoo step'!"

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

OCEANUS: A TRAGEDY.

By H. F. Frampton.

At school I used to stand up for Frederick Pullingthwaite, and he used occasionally to regale me with verses which aimed at describing the salient features of contemporaries in such a manner as to ensure any wider publicity becoming a *casus belli*.

He reminded me of this during the course of the first of our latter-day encounters. I dimly remember the fact of the verses, but not the fact of standing up for him. It is far more probable that I figured in the verses and stood up to him, for he was a small person in those days, if my memory plays me not false.

The encounter was the first of several others. Thus I am in a position to record the curious circumstances concerning his drama, which was entitled "Oceanus; A Tragedy."

He shouted bits of it to me on the Underground Railway during our third meeting. I particularly remember one couplet, because it caused several passengers in our vicinity to lose interest in their newspapers:

"The mermaids with looks which were liquid and languorous
 Beguiled Oceanus in manner most dangerous."

Another ran:

"When he saw the rough rocks lathered madly in foam,
 He wept thus to founder so nigh to his home."

As he was obliged to battle against the roar of the train, Pullingthwaite rendered these lines at the top of his voice, and practically everybody in the compartment ceased to make even a pretence of reading the paper. Poetry can exercise a more powerful appeal to the masses than many people think.

"It is not rhymed all the way through," he told me. "Most of it is in blank verse."

"I estimate," he mentioned later, "that the piece will take five hours to act. I shall have half a dozen copies typed and sent to the better-known actor-managers. I think that should save time and probably introduce a little competition between 'em for it. What d'you think?"

"I'll let you know when the rehearsals start," he said just before we parted. "Perhaps you'd care to drop in and see how it shapes?"

In time I contracted affection for Pullingthwaite. Apart from the poetry he was normal and even interesting. We got into the habit of going to places together. The

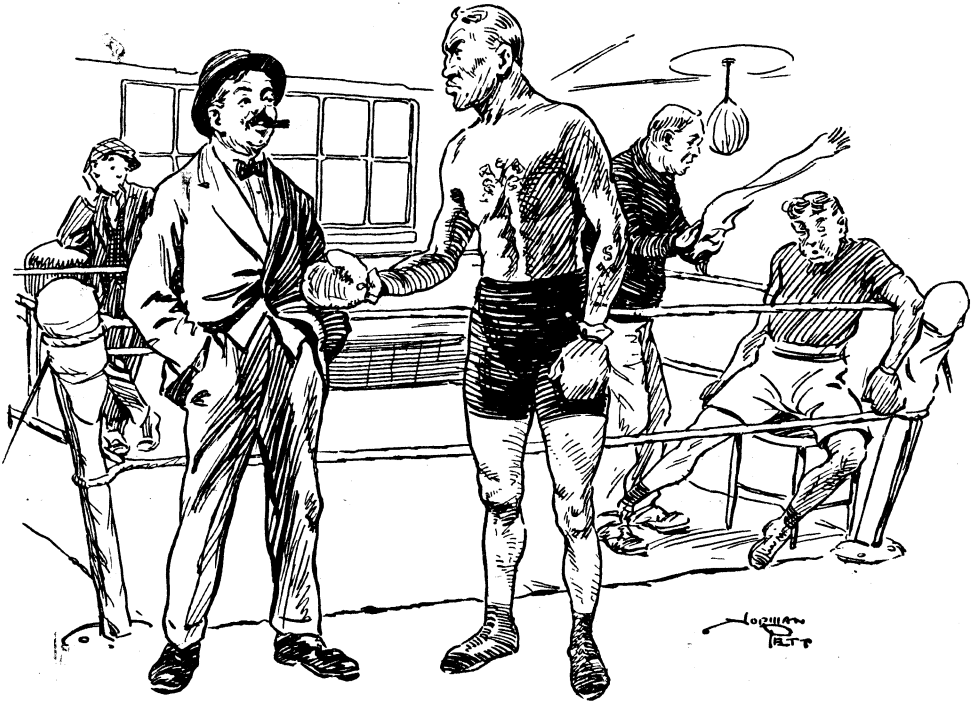
following detached statements are his various subsequent remarks concerning the tragedy "Oceanus." The intervals of time between each utterance are left to the imagination, but the interval between the first and the last is almost exactly fifteen months:

"I came to the conclusion that it was a little too long for the ordinary theatrical entertainment. I am arranging to have it set to music in order to be produced as an opera. Give me a cigarette, will you?"

"The fact is, Gilbert fitted in with Sullivan and *vice versa*. There will never be such a happy combination again. The next best thing is for the author and composer to be one

of 'Poetry.' I shall probably throw off a lyric or two to make up the volume into a respectable size."

"... and there is such a thing as being in advance of the times. People have to be educated up to a certain point before they can understand. In the meantime it is quite hopeless to expect appreciation. However, I am going to spend a few evenings examining 'Oceanus' rather carefully. I'm perfectly certain there are some splendid thoughts in it which can be best expressed separately instead of being merged into one whole, so to speak... Don't blow that match out—after you with it."



READING BETWEEN THE LINES.

THE CHAMPION: I don't want you to match me with him. I weigh twenty pounds more than he does, the match wouldn't draw, there isn't enough money in it, and I wouldn't lower myself by going into the same ring with him.

MANAGER: What makes you think you can't lick him?

and the same man. You avoid a lot of argument that way, and it doesn't give a fellow who thinks he can write music an opening for criticising the verse-endings of the artist who creates the real blood and bones, as it were, of the outfit. I am seriously thinking of letting 'Oceanus' run as a serial drama through one of the better-class monthlies."

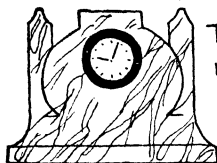
"You are quite right: there is no real public taste for the printed drama. I find that 'Oceanus' naturally divides itself into two main parts, one of which lends itself to epic treatment, so watch the book reviews and you will see something. Look under the heading

"I have discarded all but the 'wreck' scene, which I shall touch up as a brief poetical episode. It may suit one of the papers which deal with nautical subjects. I'm sorry I can't stop just now."

About this time Pullingthwaite became engaged to a charming girl, whom he referred to as "Cherry." I heard no more about "Oceanus" for some months. Eventually I dispensed with the tact with which I had learned to refer to it, and asked him plainly what had happened to it.

"Oh, you mean the tragedy," he reflected: "Cherry's brother had it last. He found bits

of it in the bottom of a portmanteau I lent to him. You don't know Cherry's brother, I suppose? He is something rather impressive in the advertising line—conducts campaigns and so on. By the way, what sort of stone looks best, do you think, in a ring—engagement ring?"



That serpentine
rock affair



gets a foothold in the Rockery



Those cigars keep
away the blight



(NB Amateurs should not attempt this)

Butcher

forward be something familiar in the lines which appear beneath the beautifully-coloured seascape, with its prominent range of wave-washed rocks and peopled beach:

"When you see the rough rocks lathered madly in foam,
You may bet that the wrecks carried Cooper's 'Pale Chrome'."



The waistcoat
and tie effects



add chic to the Allotment

But the pair of china vases
will do for —



Next Year

WHERE THE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS GO IN THE SUMMER-TIME.

I have never mentioned "Oceanus" to Pullingthwaite since. Occasionally his wife and I talk regretfully of it when he leaves the room to get the cigars after dinner. But to those who use Cooper's "Pale-Chrome" Shaving Soap, and to those who, though at present non-users, may have grown used to seeing the large and ubiquitous advertisement posters of that commodity, there may hence-

VISITOR: Is your father disengaged?
SMALL CHILD: No, he's listening in to the
bed-time stories.



AN American professor says that germs can be tamed. The notion that they will one day take the place of pet dogs, has caused some alarm in canine circles.

HOOKING IT.

To crochet when straphanging is well-nigh an impossibility, but generally a gentleman can be relied upon to appreciate the difficulty. On this particular morning my Good Samaritan occupied a corner seat until we exchanged places. Then he was standing with his back to the window. Half the time occupied with the journey up to Town he was treading on my toes and apologising for his clumsiness. The other half of the time he was doing the same to the occupant of the opposite corner seat. In his embarrassment he would often apologise first and tread on our toes afterwards, and he was actually in the middle of an apology when the train, in bumping heavily round a curve, threw him off his feet.

The other occupants of the carriage could see little in the circumstances to warrant an expletive, but, with a good view of my crochet hook sticking into him, I could only marvel at his moderation. It was an awkward situation. The hook, owing to its shape, could not be withdrawn unostentatiously, and, suffering from a temporary loss of *morale*, I was afraid to ask him whether I might take my hook. At my wits' end, I sat looking out of the window, praying for something to happen.

But things never do happen when they are particularly wanted to, and when our train ran into the terminus, the position had not altered: my crochet needle, with embroidery attached, was still sticking to him, and the ball of crochet cotton lay innocently on my lap.

Before the train came to a standstill he was already preparing to alight, and the impossibility of further procrastination rather

forced my hand. What had to be done was best done quickly, so, only waiting for him to get a little way along the platform, I gently lobbed the ball of crochet cotton after him.

This is how I figured it out: I had supplied him with a three-halfpenny crochet hook, a yard or two of embroidery as a pattern, and an almost brand-new ball of No. 30 cotton, ample material to begin with, if he displayed



A CAPITATION FEE.

COUNTRY CATERER: That will be two-and-six, gentlemen, please.

THRIFTY TOURIST: How much is that each, madam?

COUNTRY CATERER: I charge one-and-three per head, sir.

THRIFTY TOURIST: Well, madam, to show the unfairness of your system, look what a big head my pal's got compared with mine!

any aptitude for the work. Should he become so fascinated with it as to let it occupy his time on the train, he might almost be excused for retaining his seat. At all events, he would cut more of a figure than the man who, through too close attention to a newspaper, is unable to see a lady standing.

K.

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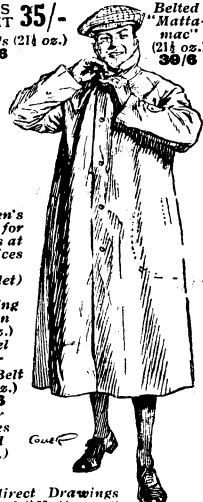
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THE PENSIVE POET.

Far from London, smoky London (though the epithet's unfair,
Since the Smoke Abatement *régimen* has purified the air
Of our venerable capital and made it clear and bright,
Yet the adjective that's oldest gives the lyrist most delight).

Far from London, smoky London (I will now begin again,
For my Muse insists on framing thus the prelude of her strain),
I am lost in meditation. Was I wise to cross the mat
(With "Welcome" written on it) of my present habitat?

Oh, surrender to the breezy charm of shingle, sea,
and sand,
Where the "Overture to Zampa" indicates the local band,
Or seek the rustic grotto or the verdant forest glade
And quaff, 'neath leafy canopies, your bottled lemonade.

Ah, you would that I were merry, gentle reader,
well I know,
And, believe me, I am grateful. But it chanced an hour ago
That I paid the bill they brought me at my boarding-house. It's odd,
But I'm practically certain that the terms were labelled "mod."

H. W. Westbrook.



FIRST LOVE.

HE: That's the girl I thought of marrying once.
HIS FIANCEE (haughtily): Indeed?
HE: Yes—when I was six years old.

"Do not worry." Thank you, reader. You have touched me to the core.
To an avaricious miner no large nugget could be more
Unequivocally precious than your deep, unspoken vow
To eradicate the shadow which obscures my noble brow.

How, you ask, can man not revel here with Nature and the sun,
And the prospect of a luncheon *à la carte* at half-past one?
Oh, inhale the breath of morning! Irresponsible and gay,
Cultivate the proper spirit on an annual holiday!

A USEFUL RELATION.

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MOTHER (horrified): Why, Johnnie?
JOHNNIE (defensively): Well, I do. I want her stockings to hang up for Christmas.



THE eight-year-old niece of a well-known worker has the optimism of the family to which she belongs. When asked if she had passed her examination in arithmetic, she answered cheerfully: "No, I did not, but I was the highest of those who failed."

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SARTORIAL ROMANCE.

A fashion paper announces that men will soon be wearing "romantic trousers." We will try to imagine what they will be like.

Oh, you ought to see our Percy in his new romantic bags!

They're the joy of all beholders, admiration never flags;

Bits from picturesque old periods upon them meet our gaze;

Note the dainty lace insertion which suggests King Charlie's days.

One leg is Jacobean, loose, the other's Georgian, tight,

With a pair of metal knee-caps like a mediæval knight,

HE: Why on earth do you keep on clapping? The last singer was awful.

SHE: I know; but I like the gown she wore, and I want to take another look at it.



A POLITICAL candidate, on paying a second visit to the house of a doubtful voter of the agricultural class, was very pleased, but somewhat surprised, on hearing from the elector that he would support him.

"Glad to hear it," said the candidate. "I thought you were against me."

"I was at first," said the other. "When the other day you called here, and stood by



THE OTHER KIND.

"Now, Tommy, what is the name of the teeth a human being gets last?"
"False."

And a dash of Broncho Billy, from the wild, romantic West,

By the highly-coloured fringes down the seams is well expressed.

Just a glance at Percy's trousers will recall the good old times

When they cultivated chivalry or wallowed deep in crimes;

There's Romeo, Dick Turpin, Robin Hood and Owen Nares,

Mixed together in the garment which our Percy proudly wears.

R. H. Roberts.



YOUNG WIFE: Yes, dear. I have your razor, but you needn't worry—this is a soft pencil.

Facing Third Cover]

that pigsty and talked for half an hour, you didn't budge me an inch.

"But after you had gone away, sir, I got to thinkin' how you'd reached your hand over the rail and scratched the pig's back until he lay down with the pleasure of it. I made up my mind that when a man was so sociable as that with a poor fellow-creature, I wasn't the man to vote against him."



MISTRESS (to charwoman): Do you ever listen in, Mrs. Perkins?

MRS. PERKINS: No, that I don't, mum! I've worked for a good many lydies in me time, but not one of 'em 'as ever caught me with my ear to the keyhole.

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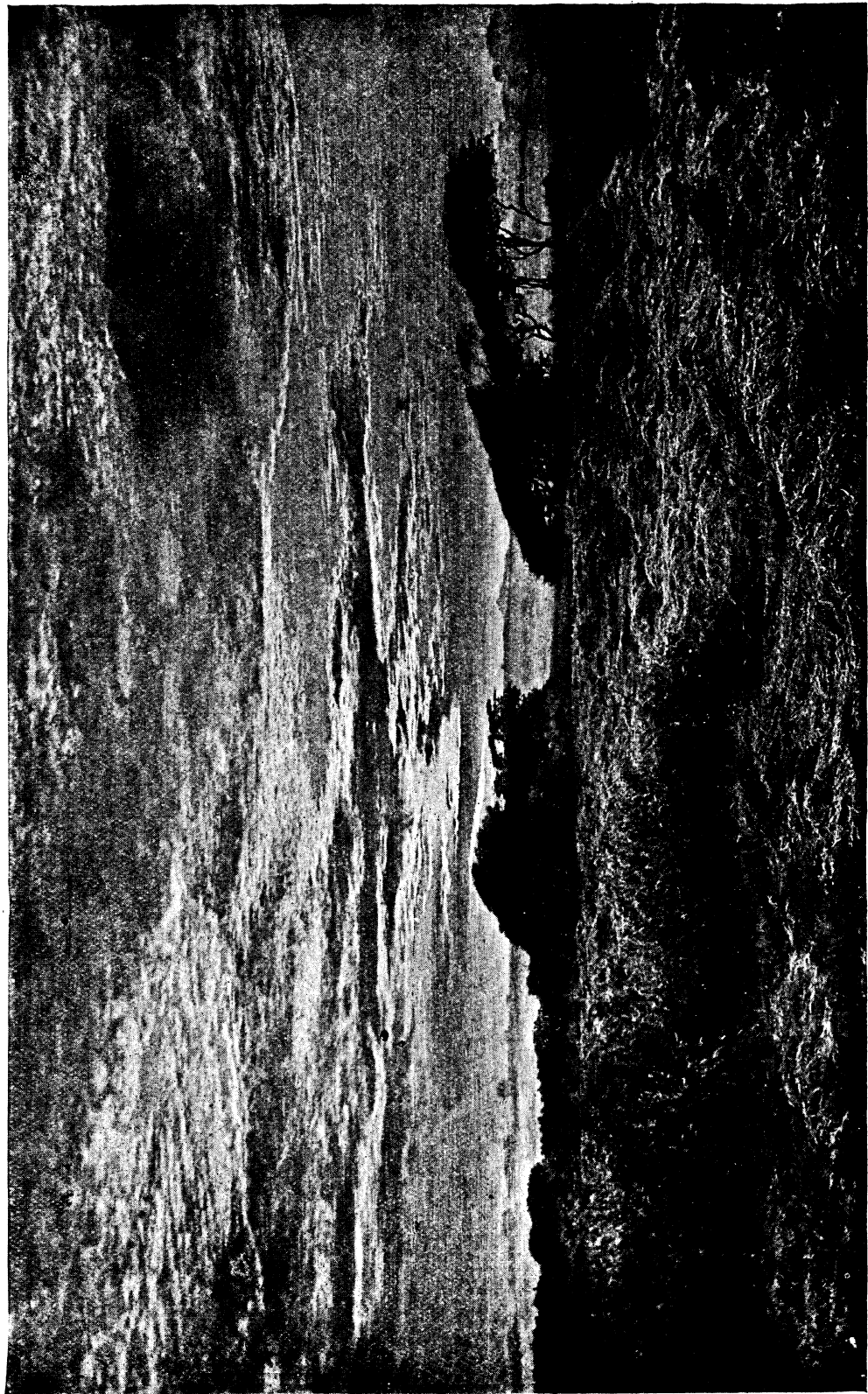
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DAYS TOIL OVER.

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"Her eyes closed, but
she was not asleep."

THE DOG AND THE DRAGON IN REMINISCENCE

By HUGH WALPOLE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

RACHEL SEDDON sat on the fourth floor of the Titan Hotel in New York, trying to read Marquette's "Humpty Dumpty."

The heavy, clumsy volume fell on to her lap, and she turned her eyes to the window. In the light of the spring afternoon—apricot purple-tinted—the cars buried deep in the black-shadowed canyon of Fifth Avenue

looked, from where she sat, like a vast army of black slugs waiting for an order from some officer. The traffic lights, watchful eyes of red or green, suddenly changed. Across the ribbons of street numbers of little black figures scurried in fear for their little lives; the lights changed again, and slowly the army moved forward, bent on its secret, inevitable purpose.

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Rachel, tired of the muddled contents of Mr. Dumpty's mind, stared about the pretty pink-and-white, soulless room. The room was close and heavy with the scent of flowers. The windows could not be opened because the noise from the street was so great. On the table were several brightly-bound volumes, not foolish, either—the last word in culture, perhaps—*young Mr. Eliot's "Waste Land,"* old Mr. Pound's collected verse, the poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay, the last word and the next word hovering even then above those so-innocent victims, waiting, eagle-like, to strike.

Rachel did not care. Her intelligent young friend, Mamie Daugherty, had brought the books, had said that Rachel must read them. Rachel had attempted a page of "*Humpty Dumpty*," and that was sufficient. She was not clever enough to understand. She could hear Mamie's shrill tones—

"But you must keep up, my dear, you must keep up!"

She did not want to keep up. She was not modern at all. She was *Early-Victorian*. She always had been.

Her eyes moved wearily back to the cars slithering through the faint yellow light. Faintly through the closed windows came the shrill cry of the electric hammer. Open those windows and the confusion that would come rushing into the room! A matter of life and death to keep them closed!

But the room was warm. Her hands closed on her lap. Her eyes fell. "*H. D.*" slipped to the floor and there wallowed in his own grime. Her son had been married only a fortnight before. It was for that that she had come to America. He was now on his way to Japan. Roddy! Like his father, so kind, so good, so unimaginative.

And now she was alone in the room. Rich, good-looking for forty-six, popular—and alone. Quite alone. No one at all. Comfortable in health, position, secure as very few, perhaps, were secure in this new uncertain world—and alone. In half an hour Clarice would arrive to take her. . . .

Her eyes closed.

II.

HER eyes closed, but she was not asleep. Her dress of dark purple silk spread its skirts about her like a cloud; her face, still sharp with some of the austerity that the early years of her married life had given her, lay back against the amber-coloured cushions of the long easy-chair. Her hands

closed in her lap, receiving at once the lifeless outline of wax. Her bosom slowly rose and fell.

Beyond the window she heard the dim voice of the metal hammer. Someone in the next room was speaking at the telephone. No, she was not sleeping, but she seemed to be narrating to someone an earlier experience—an experience of so long ago that it belonged to quite another life than hers, and not only another life, but another age, another world.

To whom was she speaking? To Roddy, perhaps—not to Roddy the second, so young, so modern, so self-assured and restrained, but to Roddy the first, whom at first she had not loved and afterwards. . . . Her eyelids flickered, her hands for an instant rose and fell again as though in a gesture of recognition.

"Well, Roddy, we did make a success of it, didn't we? In these days that's something to say. Weren't those last ten years the happiest possible to man? I like to look back now and see how happy you were. That is, perhaps, now that your son is married and gone—because, whatever I may pretend, he *is* gone; the girl will see to that—the greatest pleasure left to me.

"Who knows? It may be that so much happiness over so long a time deadens us. Certainly since your death I have had some good times. I would rather be alive than not, but that morning when I looked at you for the last time, something went, and it was not only because I was losing you; something went in the world, too. Something *has* gone out of the world. We all feel it—we all know it. Or is it only that I have reached the dangerous age—the real true dangerous age—and it is simply my own youth that I am missing? You can tell me, Roddy; you know me so well. Am I so egoistic as that? I won't believe it—something gone out of the world that we have got to get back into it or we perish.

"Intensity of feeling? The intensity, the pause that come from waiting, from listening—the pause that we can't secure now, try as we may. Why do I feel nothing intensely any longer? Is it because I am for ever being moved away from it, pushed on by machines, always something buzzing in my ears that refuses to allow me to listen?

"Machines, machines, machines! I tell you, Roddy, they're awful. Much worse than when you were alive—worse every

week—more of them, they move faster, they make more noise.

"I don't care any more. I have no fear any more, nor passion, nor deep, luxurious sense of beauty—the thing that Lizzie Rand used to call 'Putting the key in the lock and feeling that it turns.' Do you remember?"

"No fear any more! I told you, Roddy, once about that night when Grandmamma Wrexe found me in her bedroom. Talk of terror! There was intensity of feeling, if you like. That was life. I am back again, savouring it, turning it over on



"What will you do with him?" "Drown 'im," he said! "Oh, no, no, no!"

"And if we don't get back these things, we're lost—life is at the end. We, too, are machines, and the key to the door is lost for ever!

my tongue, trying to find in it something that the world hasn't got any more. Romance! Green and gold and ebony with the dragon's eyes—and the mongrel

dog! Yes, there was something in that—something precious and deep and splendid. Oh, Roddy, help me, help me to drag it back into life again!

III.

"You know—I've told you often enough—that I was only seven years old when I was taken to live in that Portland Place house—seven years old, with black, staring, rebellious eyes, like a little witch. I hated everybody because I was so desperately frightened.

"It was not a house, as you yourself know well enough, to encourage a small child's confidence. No, not a house for confidences and not, as I saw it then, for any romantic fancies, either. I was a queer little child. I like, from where I am swinging half asleep, to lean back, stretch out a hand and pick up that kid, with her large, black, staring eyes, her expression half of fright, half of curiosity, her wonder, her loneliness. Oh, it doesn't bear thinking of how eternally lonely small children can be!

"And that was a house to be lonely in! Those Portland Place houses don't seem so very large now to one's grown-up eyes—though in these after-the-war days they are much too large for any ordinary civilised person—but to a small, lonely child a desert—that was what it was, a desert! It was divided, I remember, like Cæsar's Gaul, into four parts—the servants' quarters, the public reception see-your-friends-at-teatime quarters, Granny Wrexe's quarters, and the desolate, barnlike rooms where Miss Manche, the governess, and old Nurse Protty and myself passed our dreary hours.

"They were dreary for all of us, and for myself terrifying. Terrifying, of course, because of my picture of the old lady on the other side of the wall. You saw, Roddy, how, until she died, I never quite recovered my security. To any small child she must have been awful. It wasn't only what she was in herself, but the breathless attitude that people adopted when they were speaking of her. The way Miss Manche herself would sink her voice and throw her eye over her shoulder, and as to Nurse Protty, at the mere sound of Granny Wrexe's name she would quiver all over like a jelly.

"I, at seven years old, didn't, of course, know all that the old Duchess stood for. I didn't know any of it. How much more wonderful even than she was would she have appeared to everyone then had they known of the European War! And they

didn't know—lucky for them that they didn't. But she stood for enough as it was. She was a past-mistress of pictorial effects, of silences, vanishings, speaking oracularly, sitting between her green Chinese dragons on her golden throne, bullying by proxy and all the rest of it—there's no need to tell *you*, Roddy!

"Of course to a small child she was simply terrifying, and doubly of course to a lonely, imaginative, sensitive little thing as I was. And I hadn't a friend! I wasn't allowed to play with other children. Adela and John and the others were good to me when they had time, and that, of course, was seldom enough. Miss Manche believed in her good old methods for bringing up children, saying sharply, 'Now, don't do that, Rachel!' on every possible opportunity, and being absolutely inhuman. According to Lizzie Rand, who knew her afterwards, she had troubles enough of her own; but, of course, she never took me into her confidence, although I was old for my age, and might have been of some comfort to her had she made the experiment. But when I think of Roddy Junior, and the time *he* had in his childhood, and the time *I* had!

"I was punished on every conceivable occasion, and punished generally by being shut up in the dark, because that seemed to have more effect with me than anything else. And indeed it had! I was terrified of the dark in a way that Miss Manche couldn't even begin to conceive of. I generally saw Granny Wrexe as I hid my face in the bed, and she would come slowly out of the dusk, with her waxen face, and her fingers stiff with rings, and a little body like a sharp-beaked bird's, her snow-white hair and her claw-like hands.

"But I suffered more from loneliness than from the dark. My Russian blood gave me a strain of melancholy, as you well know, Roddy, that loneliness desperately accentuated. I had simply nothing and nobody to love. All alone in that huge house. I had an old rag doll that I adored, and Miss Manche threw it into the fire one day because I had been naughty. I bit Miss Manche in the finger—I can feel the grit of the ring on my teeth at this moment—and then I determined that I would never love anything or anybody again because it hurt so terribly when you lost them.

"However, I did love something again, and it is just that memory that comes back to me now—a certain night, a terrible moment, and that night, that moment, that

passion of love and of rage seem to me just now romantic as nothing in my life has been since—no, not my love for you, Roddy. That was something else, deeper, but not so poignantly romantic. And this modern machine-made world, can it ever give one, romantically, what the old one gave one? Or is it only increasing middle-age? Whatever it is, it's a luxury to capture that moment again, to have it in one's hand, to touch it, feel it, to be aware of the romance stealing up through one's fingers. . . .

IV.

"WHAT I loved was a dog.

"I don't know why I have never told you about this before. It comes back to me to-day with more vividness than it has ever had—Tatters, the dog, called after a book that I loved when I was small, 'Rags and Tatters.' Forgotten utterly now, I suppose, and, if remembered, considered too desperately sentimental for the sophisticated cold-blooded young cradle-Freudians of to-day.

"I saw the dog when I was out for a walk with Miss Manche. It was trying to get up some area steps that were slippery with the January morning frost. It climbed a step, slipped back, and then howled. It was a kind of short-legged terrier, nearly a Sealyham, I should think, and it had a black nose and one ear black, tipped just as though it had been dipped in the ink. It looked at me as I peered over the area railing, and howled so comically, with one flap of an ear spread nakedly back, that I couldn't resist it. Miss Manche had gone on, with her head in the air, as she used to do when she was imaging matrimony, and I was down the steps and had the dog in my arms and was back again in no time at all.

"And then when I felt the dog in my arms, his body all soft and warm like a hot-water bottle and his legs hanging down, his tongue licking my glove, I simply couldn't let him go. He was heavy, and when I reached Miss Manche I was panting. I think that she must have just reached the stage in her prophecies when he first drew her head to his breast, because she said dreamily, 'What *have* you got there, darling?' and didn't wait for an answer. I put him down on the pavement, and he trotted contentedly beside me. He must have been washed quite recently by someone, because he looked clean, and he held his head up as though he were a prince.

"We were near our prison, and he followed

me in through the heavy, grim doors as though he hadn't a care in the world. The footman said nothing, and Miss Manche apparently noticed nothing. It wasn't until we were in the schoolroom, and the dog went straight for Miss Manche's work-basket, and the reels were all spilt on the floor, that he was really observed.

"He was, of course, at once condemned, I was scolded, and there were some tears. Then Miss Manche found a letter awaiting her from a favourite brother, and the dog was quiet in a corner with a biscuit that I had found for him, and, for the moment, he was forgotten.

"It was then that I had for the first time in my young life a real contact with a human being. No one had ever, so far as I knew, loved me before. Tatters loved me at sight. He loved me, too, with dignity. He didn't make me feel a perfect fool.

"That January afternoon as I now see it—how I look back to it and envy myself! Yes, envy. I am swinging now perhaps between the two—New York and myself so comfortable and so wise—and so well-armoured! Do I raise that window an inch and the roar comes tattering in, the roar so aimless and so threatening. But I have made my terms with this modern world, Roddy, and I know how to deal with it. A mask, a pair of iron gloves, an indifferent heart. No time for deep feeling, no pause for questioning. Our son is off my hands, happily married in the modern fashion. I have friends, money, flowers, security. Don't pity me, only remember that if you could come back to me, even for an hour, I would throw all this out of the window down into that squealing, bellowing Fifth Avenue—and oh, how happy I'd be!

"But no time for feeling, and that is why I have such envy for that little creature with the black-button eyes and the coal-black hair, squatting there on the school-room floor, with the dog, resting his nose on his outstretched paws, watching her.

"I felt, in some strange way, that that was to be the hour of my young life. It is impossible, I suppose, for a modern child, with its thousand and one toys and its grown-up experiences, to understand what I felt all those years ago. There was the romance of it, not only in my loneliness, my hunger for affection, but in a great house crammed with treasures, gold and silver, jade and ivory, and that old woman, sitting on the other side of the wall and receiving the fashionable world like a queen. So

completely had she always disregarded me that, on looking back now, I am lost in wonder that she bothered to keep me at all. I don't suppose she ever had bothered. In the beginning I fancy that Adela or someone had timidously suggested that it was the right thing for her to do, and, on the impulse, she had done it—and then forgotten it. Certainly on the few occasions—and you may be sure that they were as few as possible—when I confronted her on the stairs or in the hall she would glance at me with surprise and then move away, instantly forgetting me again.

"And so I lay on one side of the wall with the dog, and she sat upright on the other in the golden chair and two dragons guarding her. I wonder which of us was the happier? On that afternoon at least there could be no question.

"Perfect peace in the schoolroom. I am there now. Miss Manche busy over her letters, her rings knocking tiny raps on the table as she jerks her fingers, thinking, myself squatting, my hair in my eyes, pulling the dog's ears and whispering to him, the dog looking at me with eyes of love, perfectly understanding that I have been lonely and now am so no longer, that I have needed a friend, that himself is happy now and warm and comfortable. The snow falls beyond the window with a kind of stealthy approval of both of us, the sky turns from green to purple, the Watcher in the sky plants the stars like silver daisies.

"And then the catastrophe!

"In the form, as it so often was in those days, of Beldam, the butler. I don't know whether I ever told you about him. He vanished long before your time, expelled ultimately for stealing, I fancy. In those days he ruled us like a king. He was large and very stout, with two chins, little beady eyes, bald and shiny. He carried himself as though he had a wooden board down his back, and he used to kick out his feet when he walked, as though he were trying to jerk off his shiny shoes.

"How I hated him! Oh, how I hated him! At the thought of that hatred the waters of romance swell upward again. I wish that I could hate anyone as much to-day, that I could care enough. He was always interfering. Looking back, I can see that Miss Manche hated him quite as deeply as I did, but of course I didn't know that then. I didn't credit Miss Manche with any lively feelings save sentiment.

"But I imagine that Beldam spoke to

her as though he were her equal. He had social ambitions, I fancy. Like all the servants, he thought me 'a charity brat.' It is true that I was her Grace's quite legitimate grandchild, but as her Grace never paid the slightest attention to me, that distinction of birth went for very little. I had foreign blood in me, was given to tantrums, sulked, was in the way.

"He stood in the door, looking at us, his shining gleaming shirt-front heaving with his self-satisfaction. He gave Miss Manche some message, and then he saw the dog. He started as though a bee had stung his fat calf.

"'A dawg!' he cried.

"I should have risen in defence, but the part of me that is Slav made me pause. In another moment Beldam had Tatters by the scruff of his neck and was out of the door. I was after him. I can hear myself crying: 'Oh, Beldam, he's mine! Don't hurt him!'

"Beldam turned and grinned.

"'Yours, is 'e?' he asked.

"'What will you do with him?' I suppose that the agony in my eyes, something lost and desolate in my figure, touched him.

"'Drown 'im,' he said

"'Oh, no, no, no!'

"He looked from me to the dog, from the dog back to me again. His fat face softened.

"'E's not a bad little dawg,' he said. 'We'll keep 'im until to-morrer morning and see.'

"He departed downstairs, Tatters howling. I went back to the schoolroom and stood, tearless, white of face, staring at Miss Manche.

"The room was dark now, and my soul was dark, too. There was Romance again—the sense of finality, a child's utter abandoned despair, an agony rich in feeling. But I saw nothing romantic then. I was simply resolved that I would act—act in some blind final catastrophic way—burn the place down, if necessary, to get Tatters back again.

"I stayed there for ever so long without moving. People were used to my long silences, put them down as 'sulks,' and so left them. But on this occasion I was reaching a crisis, fighting my way out and up by myself, and reaching some height, catching some view now for the first time in my life. Why was I so meek? Why did I allow these others to 'put upon me' as they would, to order and command me? Had I no will

of my own, no personality? Was I Nobody?

"I had never had anything worth fighting for before. Now I had. What would they do to me if I defied them? Put me in prison? Starve me on bread and water? Let them. Then the Slav part of me crept up, whispered that it was better to leave things as they

"I do not, to this day, know how I heard him. Call it telepathy, if you will. My room was at the top of the house, the butler's pantry at the bottom, but I heard him.

"I got up and went to the door and listened. I had no idea of the time. When a child wakes suddenly from sleep, it is always 'the middle of the night.' I could hear the pulse of the house beating on every side of me. I opened the door and peeped

out. The voices of innumerable clocks, the trickling of minute sounds like the whisper of a subterranean stream, and the house vast and desperately cold. I stood there in my nightdress, shivering, but still, so distant and muffled that it was like the ticking of a clock in someone's waistcoat pocket, I could hear Tatters' wails.

"I put on my soft woollen slippers and my red flannel dressing-gown and stole down the passage. I had, of course, never done anything like this before. I was compact of fears and terrors, but in some way that evening a new character had come to me—I had a new soul. I was never going to be frightened by anything again.

"I stole down the stairs past the landing, where the huge china clock used to be—you know the one, Roddy, with the moon face and the planets and the winds—down into the hall, swung the green baize doors, and Tatters' howls came full upon me. He was soon in my arms, untied from the table leg, licking my neck, wagging his tail like a pendulum, whining with pleasure.



"'You shan't hurt him!'"

were—to-morrow, next week, I might do something. Too much trouble now—too much trouble now. . . .

"I was passive all that evening, washed my hands, ate my supper, kissed Miss Manche, said my prayers, undressed and crept into bed. I even slept. Then I woke with sudden abruptness. I sat up and listened. Somewhere Tatters was howling.

"I began my return journey, and then, on the second landing, bewildered by the cold and the weight of Tatters in my arms, I passed through the wrong door.

"I didn't realise it until I had gone through two rooms, and then I almost slipped and fell. In my woollen shoes I was sliding on the black ebony floor of the green drawing-room.

"You remember that room well enough. How hideous by our modern standards, with its heavy statuary, huge black fireplace, gold ceiling and faded tapestries!

"In the night, with the moonlight flickering in through the shutters, it was ghastly.

"I was terrified out of my senses, rushed through a door, then another one, fled panting into a third room, Tatters slipped from my arms, a small table crashed to the floor with a terrifying noise, and a voice said 'Who's there?'

"I was in Granny Wrexe's bedroom! That would make something of a subject for a painter, I think, even in these clever days when subject pictures are so completely out of fashion—the small, terrified child in her nightdress, the match suddenly struck, the candle lighted, revealing the high four-poster bed with its dark red hangings and the old woman sitting up, her nose sharp like a pin, her eyes flashing fire.

"So at least those eyes seemed to me. That is the impression that I finally carry away with me—two fiery eyes, the cruel sharp line of the mouth, the untidy hair, the long skinny hands.

"Frightened! Terror beyond any words to describe descended and wrapped its icy cloak around me. Agony of fear piled up by endless hours of imagination, picturing her never like this in her blue bed-jacket and her grey hair tumbling over her shoulders, but this new figure was more fear-creating than the recognised one.

"I don't know what I expected. Instant death, I fancy.

"To the repeated 'Who's there?' I answered, 'It's me, Granny. Rachel.'

"I had never conceived of her, I suppose, as at any time sleeping. She always had, as you know, to the very day of her death, a love of fantasy and colour, and the bed-posts were of dark red lacquer, there was a heavy Chinese image of dull gold staring, unblinking, at me across the room, a mirror of old silver sparkling in the candle-light. The ugly old woman with her scrawny neck, her yellow skin, her scattered grey hair, was

strange enough in that setting. I took it all in, I think—I was observant enough from the earliest time—but what principally occupied me was my determination to overcome my own terror. I *wasn't* going to show her, and yet it was all I could do to force my legs to support me, and my teeth were chattering so that I was resolved to speak as little as may be. We stared at one another. She was, I fancy, frightened, too, startled out of her sudden sleep not so easily won at her age.

"'What are you doing here?' Not very far removed, that question, from—

"'Who are you?'

"'I came—the wrong room. . . .'

"It was then that Tatters played his part. He suddenly from nowhere sprang on to the bed and barked at the old woman for all that he was worth. He had never, I suppose, seen anything so hideous before. At any rate, he was bewildered by the candle-light, dazzled by the silver mirror, and barked to give himself courage.

"Well, she was frightened then, indeed and indeed. A child from nowhere, a dog from the bowels of the earth, in the middle of the night, in the very holy of holies. . . .

"She stared, and then suddenly her terror yielded to rage. She seized Tatters and shook him to and fro with her old whipcord hands, the while her grey hair, like Medusa's locks, waved in the breeze. The strangest curses came from her lips. I was too young at the time, but, looking back, I fancy that there were words there, real stable-door, barnyard words, that years of artificial decorum had checked, that only possibly poor Adela had ever heard. Back to her eighteenth-century forebears, and not such a great distance at that.

"In any case I didn't listen. When I saw Tatters shaken like a rat, and caught a glimpse of his astonished eyes, something happened to me. I rushed at the bed, screaming.

"'You shan't hurt him! You shan't hurt him!' I cried. 'You're wicked! You're wicked!'

"She turned and, realising the dog, slapped my face a stinging, hurting slap that I can feel to this day.

"'You bad, bad child!' she panted. And then suddenly it was over—over for ever for both of us.

"Never again would she pass me in the hall and have to pause before she remembered who I was. Never again would she be unaware of me on the other side of the wall,

gone for ever any hope of friendship or even armed neutrality.

"She would never forget. She never did.

"We gave one another a long, quiet look. She patted, I remember, the edges of her bed-gown. Her look at me was almost furtive. My look at her was defiant, and in that defiance I discovered my own true personality, never to lose it again.

"I picked up Tatters and went. . . ."

* * * * *

Rachel Seddon woke with a start. Someone was in the room—Clarice Horby! Dear, darling Clarice!

"No, I was asleep, dear. Well, not

exactly asleep—half dreaming, half remembering. Those were romantic days. Nothing like them any more."

"What days?" Clarice bent down and kissed her.

"Oh, no time at all. Have you the car outside?"

"Yes. We were due in Seventy-First Street ten minutes ago."

"All right. But can't we go up Madison? There's a dog shop there."

"A dog shop?"

"Yes. I thought I'd like—oh, just to look—not to buy, of course. But dogs are such darlings—especially mongrels."



NOSTALGIA.

DOWN the long street the sunset flame
Fills all the narrow sky,
And through the high, wide-open window-frame
My swift thoughts homeward fly.

The chimneys and the house-roofs stand
Jet-black against the gold . . .
But I look out o'er stretches of pale sand
Where winds blow fresh and cold.

Below me many a traveller hastes
Along his road to home . . .
My path leads over gleaming ocean wastes
Lit by the snow-white foam.

I see the small beloved town
By clear sea-water kissed;
The harbour, the grey houses leaning down
To waves of amethyst;

The fishing-boats that poise and dip
Like brown-winged butterflies;
I feel the salt spray blown upon my lip,
I hear the sea-gulls' cries.

Far down the street the sunset glows . . .
My spirit wanders free,
Watching another sunset, gold and rose,
Burn o'er a western sea.

EVA MARTIN.

COMMON FAULTS IN GOLF THEIR CAUSES AND CURES

By BERT SEYMOUR

Winner of "The News of the World" Tournament, 1921, the Croydon and District Professional Alliance Cup, 1920, and the Essex Championship Cup, 1922

(In a chat with Clyde Foster)

Illustrated from action-photographs by Percy G. Luck for which Bert Seymour himself has posed

THE WRONG STANCE.

I HAVE cured many defaulters on the spot by simply altering their stance.

Now, stance is a fundamental question in golf. For my own part, I use the same stance for every club, except that I bring the feet gradually nearer, as the required shot shortens, even till I come to the putt, when both heels touch, and a straight line could be drawn across the toes.

Many good golfers place the left foot three or four inches behind the right foot. That is not the stance I recommend. I see in it the danger of the left foot turning outwards in the act of making a full swing, whereupon the shot lacks "pep," and there is a tendency for the club head to travel inwards across the body, instead of straight outwards.

LOSS OF LENGTH IN DRIVING.

Not only is better direction obtained by the square stance, but I think greater length is also gained.

If your driving has gone wrong and your length is greatly curtailed, try this rather-more-than-square stance, by putting the left foot an inch or two forward. You may be agreeably surprised with the result. No matter what shot I employ, whether with brassie, spoon, iron, mashie, mashie-niblick, or niblick, I still stand in this way, though, as I have said, the feet are brought closer for the iron shots than for the wooden shots, until they touch at putting.

PULLING.

I wonder how many thousand golfers in the world are at this moment bemoaning the fact that they have contracted the bad habit of pulling or of slicing. We all get a touch of these complaints now and again.

Nine times in ten pulling will be found to be due to taking the club back too far out from the body and then bringing the hands across the body after hitting the ball. The cure is to bring the hands inwards towards the body in going back and throwing the hands forward as the shot is made. This keeps the ball on the straight.

The wrong sort of "pull" shot is one which starts off immediately going away to the left into trouble. The surest and simplest cure is, as I have indicated, to stand square and, instead of taking the club back away from the body, bring the club inwards gradually the moment it leaves the back of the ball.

Pulling may also often be caused by stiffening the right leg as the right shoulder tries to come through—but cannot get through in consequence—when the ball is being struck.

The cure for this is to let the right hip come through along with the right shoulder. In this way the club may be sent straight forward through the ball. Stiffening the right leg after the club has come down cannot but strike you as a ridiculous thing to do. If, therefore, you are in the throes

of the pulling habit, just let your right hip come nicely round at the right moment and your pulling will disappear.

SLICING.

Now, then, we come to slicing, the commonest trouble from which golfers suffer, and even more serious than pulling. Slicing

where the ball lay. But do not push the hands forward; swing them. The club-head cannot then turn outwards as it does when the shot is sliced. Neither is the ball likely to glance to the right off the club-head. Be sure also not to let the hands get in front of the club, as, in that case, any evil thing may happen.

Another great cause of slicing is bringing the right hip round and keeping the right shoulder back. In other words, as a pull goes to the left and a slice to the right, the causes are the exact contrary of each other.

To remedy slicing the shoulders must be swung evenly round as the follow through is being executed.

INTENTIONAL PULLING AND SLICING.

As to pulling or slicing deliberately, according to the direction of the wind or to avoid a clump of trees, I advise leaving those highly skilled shots alone. It is astonishing how very little effect a cross-wind, blowing from either side, has upon a truly hit ball that has been propelled from the centre of the club-face in the direction of the flag.

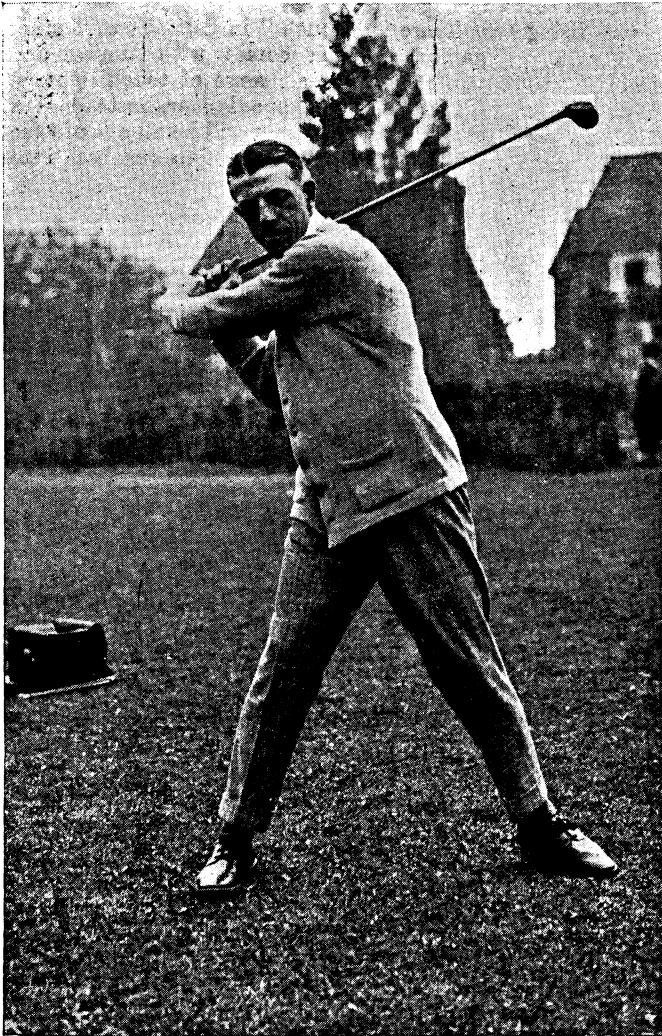
HEELING.

It can be easily understood that "heeling"—hitting the ball with the heel of the club—has its origin in standing too near the ball or pushing the hands out as the club-head comes to the ball. The cure for this is to make sure that the ball is first addressed with the centre of the club, which is then brought into the same position when the blow is dealt. The distance at which one stands from the ball should be regulated by

the feeling that the arms are neither stretched nor cramped.

SKYING.

Skying is a fault which is easily overcome, none more so. The ball is lifted too high



THIS IS THE FAULTY SWING WHICH RESULTS IN A PULL. THE LEFT LEG IS STIFFENED INSTEAD OF THE KNEE BEING BENT INWARD TOWARDS THE RIGHT KNEE.

is generally caused by keeping the left leg stiff after the ball is hit.

There is one never-failing cure—bend the right knee on coming to the ball and so let the club-head go on in a straight line, as far as the arms will permit it, over the spot

when the club is brought up abruptly in taking it back and abruptly after the ball has been hit. Sometimes this error is so accentuated with the driver off the tee that the shot is ridiculously shortened, like a sort of mashie shot.

Teeing the ball too high is another cause of skying, as then the club may come through so much under the ball that the shot is "spooned" up, instead of being swept away with a low rising flight.

To avoid skying it is only necessary to tee low and throw the left arm well back for the upward swing and to bring the right arm well through after contact with the ball.

TOPPING.

Topping is a very common fault, but though the cause is a very simple one it is not so easily got rid of. When a shot is topped the player has lifted his head and shoulders; possibly also risen upon his toes at the beginning of the swing. The natural result is to come down upon the top of the ball, as the original position he took when the ball was addressed has been changed.

This "lifting" habit clings hard when once formed. The cure is to stand firm and easy and fix the gaze on the back of the ball till the shot is made, making sure that there is no heaving of the shoulders during the swing.

PRESSING.

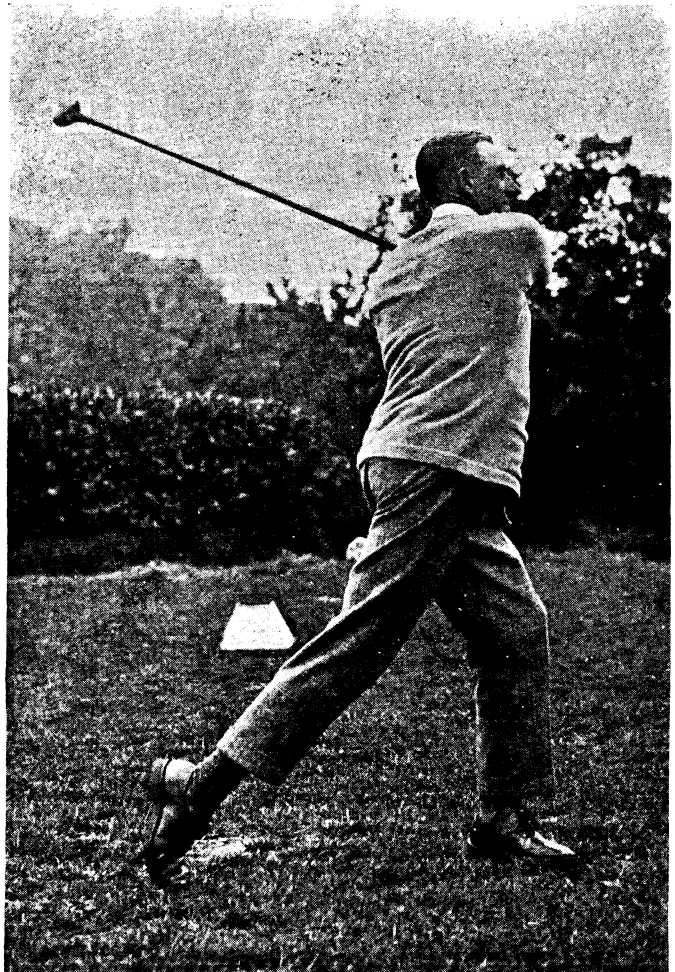
I need hardly remind you of that prevalent evil known as pressing. Golfers talk a lot about this, and I often wonder whether they know what they are talking about. A good player may press with all his might without any disastrous consequences. But pressing in his case is not the sort of pressing which the majority of golfers know to their cost to be bad.

The good player times the shot none the less accurately, keeping the hands in their

proper place behind the club head and so only imparting additional speed to the swing, which is yet consistent with perfect timing. You, most probably, press the hands too far and half drag the club head to the ball. In that case your effort has been mis-applied and things go very far wrong indeed.

LOSS OF "TOUCH."

There is "touch" in golf as in all other games. Touch comes with timing and without timing all sense of touch departs. Golf then becomes a labour, instead of a game. Presently, you will be all out of tune with yourself, as if the club and ball were fighting against you.



THE CLUB HAS HERE BEEN PULLED ACROSS THE BODY AT THE FINISH INSTEAD OF BEING THROWN FORWARD. THE HEAD HAS ALSO GONE AWAY UPWARDS, IN VIOLATION OF THE RULE THAT IT OUGHT TO BE LEANING OVER THE RIGHT SHOULDER.

Small wonder things go wrong then. Get back to the easy swing, let your wrists and forearms act fluently. Things that have been going wrong will now begin to go right, and your game will improve as the round proceeds, unless you make the fatal error of resuming your pressing practices.

FORGETTING THE "SLOW BACK."

I am aware that professionals are often twitted by their pupils with going back "like lightning" after they have laid down the rule in a lesson that the club should be taken back slowly.

This may be quite true, but I am willing to confess that many times I have found it necessary to remind myself of the need for taking the club back more slowly. The professional golfer may be able to take liberties, but even he does this at some risks.

Nothing is gained by going back quickly, and it is much the better plan to go back slowly. The danger in going back quickly is that one is apt to come away from the top too hurriedly, and also to descend by a line different from the line taken with the upward swing. That is always a bad mistake.

You can go up too slowly, it is true, but the club should be swung back, not lifted, in a smooth easy manner, and the speed should be increased—as it naturally will be—gradually on its descent. At the moment of impact it will be found that the club head attains its highest degree of speed. You must not try to accomplish this by forcing the wrists through too soon.

Here is a golden rule that will always keep you on the right road. Both in the ascent and in the descent let the club lead the way, with the wrists in readiness to impart power at the bottom of the swing. There must be no lurching or lunging, but a smooth swift descent behind the ball. The club head must not be checked but permitted to continue its course in pursuit of the ball.

It would be easy to confuse you with a multitude of directions here. I am sure that you will be keeping quite enough in mind if you stand easily, steadily, not stiffly, and lash the club round, keeping the forearms and wrists moving without any deliberate tightening of the muscles.

Think rather of lashing at the ball than of hitting it. With that idea in your mind, everything should be right. Should you resort to pressing, the effect of it will

invariably be to upset your balance and ruin the shot.

In the full swing the ball should be seen over the left shoulder just before the club begins to come down "Show the left shoulder the ball," is a quaint saying of one of my brother professionals. It contains a great element of truth.

"Show the right shoulder the place where the ball was at the finish of the swing" would be a good idea to keep in mind. This will also serve to prevent the lifting of the head.

A common error in taking the club back is that of raising the left arm and putting forward the left elbow in such a way as to hide the ball altogether at the top of the swing.

IGNORING THE "STRAIGHT LEFT ARM."

If there is a "cure all" for the ills that golf is heir to it is the straight left arm in the back swing. This is the first thing to learn and the one thing never to forget.

I have known despairing golfers come on their game instantly, on having their attention called to their neglect of this first movement in golf.

Try to think out its value for yourself, while I talk to you about it. Nothing is more easily appreciated. It is pre-eminently the most reasonable thing to do.

The club must come at the ball from behind—not from above. Only when this is done does the "follow through" become possible.

But a "straight" left need not be a "stiff" left. It is just here that error creeps in. You may have noticed that Arthur Havers, Open Champion, recently stated in an interview that he had for some time been taking the club back straight, but too stiffly, with his left hand. On correcting this, he won the championship and the Gleneagles Tournament.

A certain amount of play must still be kept in taking back the left arm, so that the elbow bends, as an elbow should, as one begins to swing the club over the right shoulder into the horizontal position of readiness to whip it round for the down swing.

Some golfers, notably Arnaud Massey, the great French professional and ex-Open Champion, and Harry Vardon, six times champion, throw the club well out behind in bringing it down. Their object in doing this is to come at the ball on a level plane two or three feet before the moment of impact. To come down on the ball would

be obviously absurd, as that movement would tend to fell the ball instead of sweeping it away.

Stiffness has little or no part in the art of golf, no matter what may be the shot you are making and no matter what club you are using. An excellent rule is to grip the club firmly with the left hand and lightly with the right hand in the back swing. The right hand will close automatically when the ball is reached. There is no reason to tighten it consciously.

At the top of the swing the weight of the body should be thrown on the right leg to secure a striking attitude for the making of the shot. The hands should be allowed to fall into position before the club is hurried away on the downward swing.

If the right leg is tightened to the stiffness of a post, there is great danger of jerking in starting to bend it again; for the right knee must bend as the club head nears the ball, just as the left knee bends as the club head leaves the ball after the address.

FAULTY PIVOTING.

Pivoting is a fundamental principle of golf. Try to make a shot without it, and you will at once realise how indispensable pivoting is. The underlying idea is to facilitate the twisting of the body for the follow through.

Herein lies the art of golf; that the player shall pivot and time his shot, bringing the hands and the shoulders simultaneously to the ball.

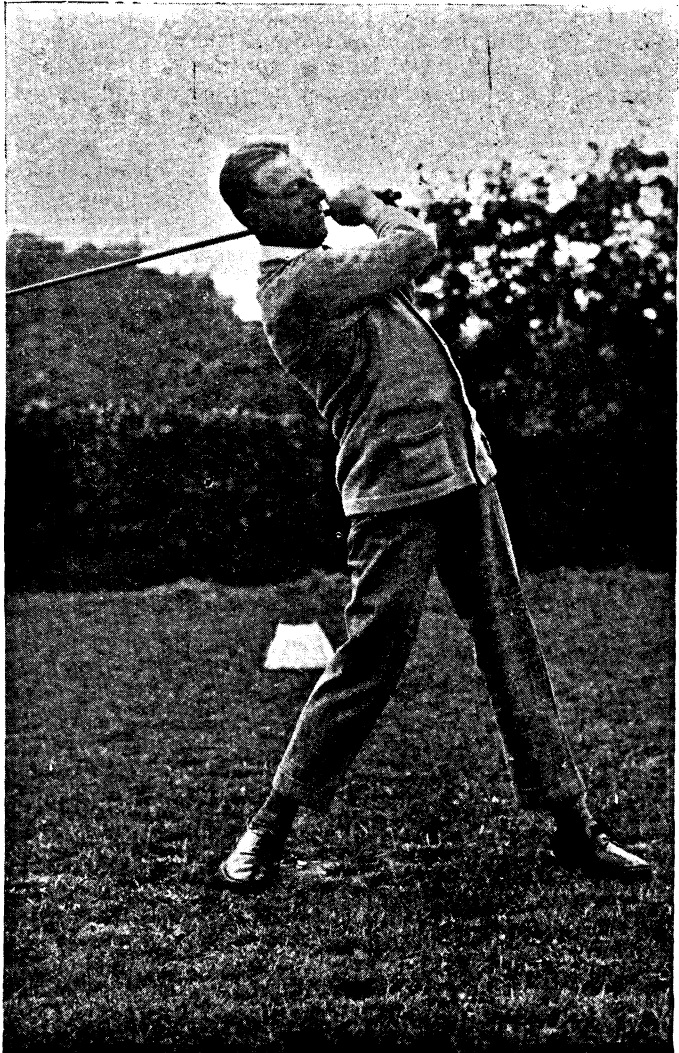
Pivoting must not, however, be done so loosely that the body winds out of control. It must be felt all the time that the left foot is holding the ground firmly enough to maintain its position when the downward part of the swing attains its greatest speed.

If the left toe is permitted to turn outwards—slipping, so to speak—the pivoting has been overdone and the shot cannot be a straight

one. There is also, however, the danger of tightening the left leg too much in the determination to prevent the left foot from leaving its original position.

Pivoting should not be done deliberately so much as naturally and incidentally to the swing. Take a club in your hand without thinking at all of pivoting. Swing it round your neck and you will find how natural pivoting is. It is only when a player is pressing for a long shot that his natural pivoting is apt to go wrong.

If the right leg is tightened and the body made to turn round the right hip in taking the club back, it will be found that pivoting



THIS LUDICROUS POSITION AT THE FINISH OF THE SWING PROVES THE ERROR OF TAKING THE HEAD BACK AFTER HITTING THE BALL. THE RESULT MAY BE ANYTHING BUT A GOOD SHOT.



ALL WRONG SHOTS LOOK WRONG. THIS CERTAINLY DOES. THE HEAD IS LEANING AWAY FROM THE BALL.

happens as a consequence. But there cannot be proper pivoting if the body is swayed backwards.

Pivoting presupposes that the body is turning round in its original position for the upward swing and coming round again without any swaying for the downward swing. The Americans pivot without much lifting of the left heel. But they lift it all the same and grip the ground firmly with the ball of the left foot. Without this the swing must wobble. It is absolutely necessary to maintain a perfect poise.

Rising too much on the toes is fatal, as the feet are thus very apt to slip out of position, when the ball will generally glance into the rough on the right. Harry Vardon

has a habit of working the nails of his left shoe well into the turf before beginning to swing. This is done to make sure of holding firmly to the ground in the act of pivoting.

As each shot is finished, with whatever club, the left foot should come down into its original position. If a player whitened the sole of his shoe and stood on a plastic black ground, the left foot print should scarcely be expanded after the shot is made.

Some golfers chalk the face of their clubs to see exactly how they are coming to the ball. The beginner might find this device quite helpful.

To sum up, on the subject of pivoting, it must be borne in mind that while driving is impossible without it, there exists great danger in over-doing it. The left heel should rise only very slightly off the ground during the backward swing.

It is necessary to feel the left foot gripping the ground until the ball has been swept away. But this "gripping" must not be accompanied by a stiffening of the left leg. Beware of this. And also beware of bending the left knee outwards, away from the body. It should be bent towards the right leg.

Any golfer of ordinary suppleness can make a fairly full swing with the driver without getting on his left toe in taking the club back.

AN UNSTEADY HEAD.

Lifting the head in making a shot with any club is the commonest of golfing errors. The beginner is apt to do this as he takes the club back. He usually rises on his toes at the same time and produces such a comical picture that, were he to see himself in the mirror, he would laugh.

When the head is moved backwards in making the upward swing, the turning of the shoulders can only be very incompletely performed, and it becomes impossible to bring the left shoulder over the ball.

The inevitable consequence of moving the head in this way is to lurch at the ball. In almost every case the effect will be that the club head strikes the ground behind the ball instead of the ball being swept cleanly away, as when the player keeps his head still.

I always impress upon pupils, who find it difficult to keep their heads still, that they should look closely at the back of the ball—the side nearest them. This simple device goes far to steady a wandering head.

Another steadying device is to grip the ground firmly with the ball of the left foot and to bend the knee inwards, as the club is taken back. Think also of the left shoulder coming round under the chin as if the head were on a swivel. The hopelessness of playing any shot whatever in golf without keeping the head steady should also be borne in mind.

The head should be kept on the same level all through the shot. In no other way can the ball be hit as intended when you were addressing it.

Lifting the head alters the whole position. The ball might just as well not have been addressed. I had myself photographed making a shot in this manner and the picture tells its own tale.

Suppose you stood under a flat board smeared with wet paint; and suppose yourself to be wearing a white cap that just misses the board above your head by half an inch as you stand addressing the ball. Should there be any sign of paint on the top of the cap after the shot, it will prove that you have lifted your head. Further proof will be found in the fact that the shot is a bad one.

Think of some of Joe Kirkwood's trick shots such as driving the ball off the top of a watch without cracking or scratching the glass, and you will understand what it meant by keeping the head steady and on the same level.

Swaying the head—even on the same level—is also bad; almost as bad as lifting the head. Few can do this without, in some measure, spoiling the timing of the shot.

In plain terms the head must be kept still—not rigidly, but comfortably still, till the ball has been despatched. What happens after that cannot matter much. The head of the club and the ball are not long together. Yet everything depends upon how and when they meet.

LOSS OF BALANCE AND TIMING.

In every ball game, and particularly in golf, balance is of the greatest importance. You know this to be true and may think it wasting words, on my part, to call attention to anything so obvious.

But the best of us need to be reminded of this from time to time. If I were asked to summarise golf in one word, I should choose "Timing." Without perfect balance there can be no perfect timing, and without perfect timing golf becomes the most tantalising of all games, as bad shot follows bad shot with exasperating persistence.

Haste and nervousness are the enemies of balance and timing. All the movements then become uneven and jerky; the essential grace of good golf is gone.

The way to recover lost balance and lost timing is to take things easy till your poise is restored; and even after that, for the best golf is always played with comparative ease. I have made two drives, hitting as hard as I could in the one case and with swift ease in the other. Both were long shots and the easy one kept the better line, in addition to costing me no expenditure of energy.

It is a great matter in a round of golf, which extends to four miles and two hours, that the player should acquire the secret of playing his best golf with the least effort.

Feel as you swing that "all of you," so to speak, is coming smoothly together into the shot: feet, knees, shoulders, wrists, hands and club moving with unbroken rhythm.

This happy combination is impossible when the golfer is half-blind with haste or nervous dread that the shot will be botched. In these circumstances you may be sure it will be botched all right.

I have often relieved the distress of players whose game had gone to pieces by impressing on them the need for timing and showing them, as far as I could, how this great virtue is acquired.

What is timing? That question is more easily asked than answered.

Timing, I should say, is the harmonious blending of mind and muscles that brings the head of the club, no matter what club, to the ball at the most effective moment, when the best results are obtained by a minimum of conscious effort.

The golfer knows when he has perfectly timed any shot. His sensations are very agreeable then, and in the case of players

CHOOSING THE WRONG CLUB.

Things very often go wrong by choosing the wrong club through the fairways. An excellent rule is not to under-club yourself, because if you do, the danger of pressing stares you in the face. The fact that an opponent has played a long mashie shot to the green should not induce you to attempt the same, if you know that, in order to reach the green with the mashie, a very unusual effort will be required of you. Without a moment's hesitation, should the lie permit, take your mid-iron and get there comfortably.

Suppose you act otherwise and attempt the well-nigh impossible mashie shot, landing your ball in a bunker, such poor judgment will lead you to mutter, or even to utter, very uncomplimentary things about your self.

From that point on for some little time you may feel so rattled that things will go all wrong, solely because of that ill-advised mashie shot which cost you the hole or several strokes.

AN UNSUITABLE SET OF CLUBS.

When a "patient" comes for treatment, telling me that he cannot live up to his handicap or anything like it, and that unless 'I can do something for him, he must

make the humiliating appeal to the Committee to have his handicap raised, I frequently ask him to turn out his clubs that I may examine them. They may be very good clubs, yet I may find fault with them as badly suited to him or her, as the case may be.

I never like to see a bagful of clubs with a number of different makers' names on them. As a rule, in that case, they lack uniformity and harmony of structure, if I may so speak. Their "lies" and lengths may be all in and out; the grips may be



HERE THE SWAYING FAULT IS EXEMPLIFIED. THE BODY HAS COMPLETELY LEFT ITS ORIGINAL POSITION, AND NINE TIMES IN TEN THE SHOT WILL BE A BAD ONE.

who have not formed the timing habit, shots made in this harmonious way are generally followed by some such remark as this:—"I scarcely felt the club head meet the ball. What would I not give to be able to play all my shots in this way?"

In your attempt to recover the lost art of timing, or to improve what little timing you have, I should advise you to take things very easily and work out your salvation by slow and sure degrees. Do not strive for length. Let length come when timing brings it.

all different. Altogether the collection places me in the awkward position of being unwilling to say what I think about them, while knowing well that some part of the "patient's" trouble is traceable to his scratch lot of clubs.

More serious still, they may be too heavy or too light. I have done pupils some good by lengthening their clubs an inch or two, when, after watching them swinging, they seemed likely to benefit by this. Perhaps Nature has given them very short arms, and, of course, a person with short arms needs longer clubs than a person with long arms.

Better two or three inches on the length of the arm than two or three inches on the length of the club, because, in the one case,

the additional leverage is a live thing, and, in the other case, it is not. Longer clubs, on the other hand, require more careful manipulation as the margin of mis-direction is increased.

In the days of the gutta ball, golfers of all statures used what were called fishing-rod clubs; long, whippy shafts that were lashed round the head in a manner that would seem positively wild to-day, when stiff shafts are favoured by nearly all the leading players.

Still, when things are going wrong, it is well to make experiments; similarly, when one's golf has reached a stationary condition, making progress apparently hopeless, faults must be discovered and overcome by the adoption of better methods.



AUTUMN TOKENS.

THE dawn is veiled in bridal mist,
But through its gauzy whiteness spilling
Tinkles a robin's silvery trilling—
A madrigal for all who list.

The beaded webs that deck the lawn
Show where, last night, the fairies dined;
They left their tablecloths behind
When, feasting late, they fled at dawn

Beneath the yellowing chestnut tree
A score of conquers strew the ground,
Each one, uncradled, plump and round—
A bit of rare mahogany!

JESSIE POPE.

"‘I say,’ he said quietly, ‘it isn’t much good going on like this, is it?’ Katharine shrugged her white shoulders."



THREE'S COMPANY

By DORNFORD YATES

*Author of "Valerie French," "Berry and Co.," "Jonah and Co.," "Anthony Lyveden,"
"The Brother of Daphne," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

DREAMILY, Mrs. Festival regarded the ceiling.

"I frequently wonder," she said, "what possessed me to marry you."

"My beauty of soul," said her husband, pleasantly. "You were all dazzled."

"I think," continued his wife, "it was out of pity. You know. When you see people laughing at someone, and the someone joins in, never dreaming that they're the object of the mirth, one feels sorry for them."

Captain Giles Festival swallowed before replying.

Then—

"I know," he said. "Like when we were dining with the Mascots, and you kept talking about soap."

Katharine Festival flushed.

The reminiscence was not one which she cherished.

Lady Mascot's father and soft soap had been mutually constructive.

At length—

"I might have known," she observed, "that you wouldn't appreciate it. Gratitude is not among your attributes."

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"If you mean," said Giles, "that I don't feel impelled to fall down and worship you for taking my name—in vain, you're perfectly right. I gave you a blinkin' good chance, and you blinkin' well took it."

Katharine drew in her breath.

"Do you imagine," she demanded, "that the chance you were kind enough to give me was the only chance I had?"

"If," said her husband, "I imagined anything, I should imagine you considered it the best. If one can only have one strawberry, one doesn't deliberately take a bad one, does one? Not even out of pity?"

"No," said Katharine, sweetly. "Only by mistake."

There was a pregnant silence.

Then—

"Sold," murmured Giles, "the very deuce of a pup—by Mistake, out of Pity. No flowers, by request."

"Let me at once admit," said Katharine, coldly, "that I did not select you for your good taste."

"Select"? "cried her husband. "Select"? He laughed wildly. Then he covered his eyes. "Oh, give me strength."

"I suppose you consider that you selected me."

"I did. In a weak moment——"

"Are you," said Katharine, shakily, "are you going to say you were blind?"

"I am not," said Giles. "I was not blind. I was—well, er, just nicely."

"Well, I wasn't," said his wife hotly. "I was blind. I thought I was accepting a gentleman. I find I accepted a——"

"I know," said Giles mercilessly. "I know, teacher. A foul and loathsome worm."

"No," said his wife, calmly. "Just an ordinary cad."

Captain Festival rubbed his nose, thoughtfully. Then he extended his arms and, after yawning luxuriously, interlaced his fingers and placed his hands behind his head.

"My dear," he observed, "be reasonable." Katharine closed her eyes with an expression of unutterable contempt. "All this, just because I ventured to suggest that, if Beatrice had time to do it, she might take charge of my linen."

"Have you ever heard of meiosis?" said Mrs. Festival. "It means the opposite of exaggeration."

"I repeat," said Giles, "that that was the humble suggestion at which you took offence. I mayn't have put it in those words, but——"

"You didn't," said Katharine. "You put it much more vividly. You said that the condition of your wardrobe was enough to make a beachcomber burst into tears——"

"So it is."

"—and that, if I hadn't got the moral courage to order 'a lazy sweep of a lady's maid to pull up her rotten socks,' I could 'blinkin' well finance her' myself. You added that you'd given up a valet, so that I could have more money 'to blow upon my back,' and that my interpretation of my marriage vows was funny without being vulgar."

Her husband swallowed.

"I was referring," he said doggedly, "to your promise to cherish me."

"You promised the same."

"Yes, but I keep it, Kate. I do cherish you. I'm always cherishing you. Only yesterday afternoon—seventeen blinkin' quid for a hat worth about eighteen pence . . . and not a murmur."

Katharine inspired audibly, raising her eyes to heaven.

"When," she rejoined, "when you start recounting your virtues, I want to break something. Doesn't it ever occur to you that that's my job?"

"Frequently," said Giles. "But you never do it."

"You never give me a chance."

With a supreme effort her husband controlled his voice.

"Look here," he said fiercely. "Do you think it was, er, decent of me to give you that hat, or not?"

"Oh, you can have the beastly hat," said Katharine.

"Wouldn't suit me," said Giles, mournfully. "Do you think——"

"I'll never wear it," declared his wife. "Never. I—I hate it."

"Well, let's take it back. They might allow us eighteen——"

"And why should I be overcome with gratitude just because——"

"The golden rule of blessed argument," said Captain Festival, uncertainly, "is to keep to the blessed point. Let's try, will you? . . . No answer. I referred to my short-sighted generosity solely to refute your suggestion that I was failing to cherish you. You deliberately pervert the reference into an attempt to magnify myself. What could be better?"

"Oh, that's easy," said Katharine. "You could get up half an hour earlier and put your rotten things in order yourself."

"On the *lucus a non lucendo* principle? If you want your cake, pay someone else to eat it, and then give it away? Thanks very much. Unhappily, my education was neglected. I cannot sew. Secondly, if it's either of our jobs, it's yours. Thirdly, why should I? If this house was more like a home and less like an Employment Exchange, these questions wouldn't arise. Fourthly, I'm fed up."

"How funny," said Katharine, silkily. "So'm I. Yet you slept well. I heard you."

In majestic silence her husband rose from his bed and entered an orange-coloured dressing-gown.

"Have my bed put in the next room, will you?" he said coldly. "If you don't like to trouble the servants, tell me and I'll get the commissioner from the Club."

Here he trod upon a collar-stud, screamed, swore, limped to a window and then launched the offender into Berkeley Square.

"That'll learn it," observed Mrs. Festival.

Giles regarded her with speechless indignation.

Then he swept into the bathroom stormily.

After, perhaps, five minutes he reappeared.

"I say," he said quietly, "it isn't much good going on like this, is it?"

Katharine shrugged her white shoulders.

"Is it?" repeated her husband.

His wife averted her head.

"The blessed answer," she said, "is in the blessed negative."

Giles set his teeth.

"Good. Well, let's separate. I take it you've tried. I know I have. I suppose we oughtn't to have married."

"As—as you please," said Katharine, slowly.

"We'd better go down and see Forsyth—to-day, if we can." He hesitated. Then, "There's no reason why there should be any unpleasantness about it."

"None whatever."

"Only, don't let's be lured into backing out of it. It's perfectly manifest, to my mind, that it's the only thing to do. Already we've come to the brink of it half-a-dozen times, and then Sentiment's always chipped in and pulled us back." Katharine nodded.

"Well, that's silly. We needn't scrap, but *don't let's be pulled back again*. It's—it's not good enough. Let's go through with it this time, and—and see what happens."

"Right," said Katharine, brightly.

Giles turned away slowly.

In the doorway he hesitated.

Then he spoke, looking down.

"You—you see what I mean?" he faltered. "I'd like us to—to part friends."

Katharine nodded.

When he was out of sight, she buried her face in her pillow and lay like the dead.

* * * * *

If the votes of Mayfair had been taken to elect the most popular married couple living, moving and having its being in Society, there is little doubt that Captain and Mrs. Giles Festival would have headed the poll.

The lady was twenty-five and of great beauty. Someone had once christened her 'The Dairy Queen'—as it happens, an admirable description. She was fair and fresh-faced—a study in cool pink and white. Her grave, blue eyes arrested: her magical smile bewitched. Her hair was a golden crown: her carriage, her natural grace were royal things. She did more than adorn—she refreshed her fellowship. As for her charm of manner, this was a byword. Upon her entrance, the most distinguished company became her court. Statesmen vied with subalterns to sit at her sweet pretty feet. When she danced. . . .

Giles was thirty, and looked a young twenty-six. Tall, fair, handsome, lazy-eyed, he did everything well. The way in which he made war brought him a V.C. The way in which he made love won him his wife. At the Marlborough he was universally liked. In certain cabmen's shelters he was adored. He had, I suppose, the secret of adaptability. His laugh was infectious; his turn-out, above reproach. His manners would have made any man.

Both had a keen sense of humour, and neither was ever dull. They went everywhere, and everywhere their coming was awaited and their going deplored. They had been individually invaluable: as a combination they were unique. What made them so excellent was their mutual devotion. Of this they offered no evidence, but it was obvious as the day. Had Society paraded in the Park, by common consent Giles and Katharine would have been led at the head of the column, like regimental goats. For the second year in succession they were the Season's pets.

But now an east wind had arisen out of a clear sky. Though no one else knew it, it had cursed the twain steadily for more than three months. The two peace-loving hearts found themselves constantly at war. Worse. The very qualities which should

have pacified seemed monstrously to provoke. The position had become unbearable.

* * * * *

An hour had gone by.

As Katharine entered the dining-room, her husband looked up from his eggs.

"Forsyth," he said, "will see us at twelve o'clock. Meanwhile"—he tapped a volume—"this little Know All says that we ought to have trustees."

"What of?" said his wife.

"Heaven knows," said Giles. "As far as I can gather, they'd be a sort of bufferee. Supposing you wanted to come and scratch me—well, you'd have to scratch the trustee first. And if I found you were pledging my credit—"

"But I shall," said Katharine. "Why shouldn't I? I'm your wife."

"Only for nessecssaries, dear heart. No more eighteenpenny hats."

"Is that the law?" said Mrs. Festival, blankly.

"Approximately. But don't worry. You'll have plenty to pay for them with. I can't endow you with all my worldly goods, but you shall have a fair two-thirds."

"Half," said Katharine, crossing to the sideboard. "Fair do's, old fellow. And you must have half mine."

Captain Festival frowned.

"My dear," he said shortly, "don't dither. I buy a dress-suit a year and don't pay for it. If I did, it'd be about a pony." He paused significantly. "If an eighteen-penny hat and a half costs the same as a gent's dress-suit, how many evening frocks go to the Season?"

Abstractedly Katharine helped herself to kedjeree.

As she returned to the table—

"I don't care," she said slowly; "I won't take more than my share. What shall we do about the house?"

"Well, if you don't mind," said Giles, "you'd better stay on. It'll save a lot of trouble. If you don't—I can't very well live here, and the house 'ld be going spare. That means we'd have to let, which'd send us both mad. The rooms 'ld have to be done up, we should be done down, our effects would be done in and our finer feelings would be outraged. The idea of some sticky stranger wallowing in our private bathroom sends the blood to my head."

Mrs. Festival shuddered.

Then—

"But what will you do, Gill? Of course, I should pay you a rent. The house and furniture's yours, and——"

"I shall live at the Club. As to rent—considering that you'll be better than any caretaker, I shall be up on the deal."

Katharine digested this.

"I could only consent," she said, "on the understanding that, if ever you changed your mind, you let me know. And, of course, you'd keep a key and use it whenever you liked."

"My darling," said Giles, rising, "I look forward to dining at this table at least once a week. Of course, I shan't come unasked. That would be molestation. Your trustee would be most rude. But if I behave myself. . . . Possibly, some afternoon when you were out, you might arrange for me to have a bath here. On my birthday, for instance. It'd tickle me to death."

Katharine flung him a bewitching smile.

"If," she said, "you don't tell anyone, you shall use my sponge."

"Kate," said her husband, "I perceive that we are off. This separation stunt is going to work wonders."

He was perfectly right.

Galbraith Forsyth, solicitor, was an honest man. Also he knew his world and could tell the sheep from the goats. He could be stern, and he could be most gentle. To those whom he trusted, who trusted him, he gave a service which money cannot buy. His judgment alone was invaluable. The sheep liked him, immensely. The goats hated him. But both respected him with a whole heart. If he had any pet lambs, the Festivals were among them.

He received the two, pleasedly, bade them sit down, and drew the lady's attention to a bunch of daffodils.

"Posies are seldom seen in Lincoln's Inn Fields. But when I knew you were coming, I felt that something must be done. I didn't want you to feel lonely."

"Now, isn't that charming?" said Giles. "If I could say things like that, we shouldn't be here to-day."

Forsyth looked at him, sharply.

"You see, Mr. Forsyth," said Katharine, "we've made a hopeless mistake. We thought we'd be happy, though married: and we were wrong. We can't hit it off. We've tried like blazes, but it's not the slightest good. In fact, the only thing we've agreed about for something like three months is that the sooner we part, the better for Giles and me."

"D'you mean this?" said Forsyth. "Or are you, er, pulling my leg?"

"We mean it all right," said Giles. "It sounds like a comic dream, but it's the grisly truth. For no apparent reason, Katharine annoys me. For no apparent reason, I get her goat. If we started to discuss those flowerlets, in five minutes we should be slinging books at one another. She's witty, you know, and I'm a bit of a wag. We've always fenced, for fun—always. But now we can't stop, and—the buttons are off the foils."

"He's perfectly right," said Katharine. "I'm ashamed to say it, but we lead a cat and dog life. And now we're both agreed that it isn't good enough. Don't suggest change, because we've tried that. He went away for a week. The night he came back I threw a glass at him."

"An empty one," said Giles. "Missed me by yards. But it's the—the principle."

"Exactly," said Katharine. "Besides, the glass was a good one, and now it leaks."

Forsyth, who felt the sting beneath the banter, was genuinely dismayed.

He smiled politely.

"It seems a pity," he said. "When I say that, I'm putting it very low. A pity. You mustn't be impatient, because, though I'm the keeper of your legal conscience, at heart I'm an ordinary man—with eyes in his head. I think you're playing with fire. Life's very uncertain, you know. If anything happened after you'd gone apart—the other would grieve, I'm afraid . . . have something to remember they'd give a lot to forget . . . grudge the bit of their life they'd deliberately sworn away. . . . One never thinks of Remorse, until it touches you on the shoulder. I don't suppose I should, only I've seen it . . . at work."

There was a long silence.

Then—

"Thank you," said Giles, quietly. "Now, whatever else we regret, we shall never regret having come to see you this morning." He paused. "Setting aside Sentiment, the answer is this. We should like to be able to forget the last three months. As we can't, we think it better to prevent their becoming six."

Forsyth inclined his head.

"Very good. Am I to draw up a deed? A deed of separation?"

"Please."

"What about trustees?"

"Are they a necessary evil? We don't mind you. In fact, you come under god-

sends. But the idea of inducting others into our private confessional is peculiarly repugnant."

"It's worse than that," said Katharine. "We three are familiar. If I think Mr. Forsyth a brute, I can ring up and tell him so. I couldn't do that to a trustee. In fact, the whole arrangement would become stiff, reinforced—like putting bones in a belt."

"You couldn't, for instance," said her husband, "employ that simile. For your information, Forsyth, that's not a proverb. Below the surface female woman wears a sort of comic cummerbund, four sizes too small. The idea is to displace the vitals. If she wants to shorten her life, she lines it with strips of whalebone, running the wrong way. Thus with the minimum of motion she gets the maximum of pain."

"That," said Forsyth uncertainly, "is not admittedly the function of trustees. Still, there are times when they are inconvenient. They certainly tend to cramp the style. Nevertheless . . . I'll tell you what," he added suddenly. "If you like, I'll be your trustee."

The two raised their eyes to heaven ecstatically.

"A little more," said Katharine, "and you shall use our bathroom."

"That," explained Giles, "is a kind of Garter—the highest honour it's in our power to bestow."

Forsyth picked up a pen.

"Tell me," he said, "what sort of an arrangement you want."

"Well, we're going shares," said Giles. "Once a month, I'll send her two-thirds of all the dividends and rents I've had."

"Of course it's grotesque," said Katharine, "but I'll do the same."

"Yes? What about the house?"

"She's going to caretake for me, and keep the servants on. I shall pay half her expenses."

"Oh, rot!" said Mrs. Festival.

"My dear," said Giles, "the bed of my mind is made up. Don't rumple it."

"I think that's fair," said Forsyth, wondering what the Law Society would say. "Next?"

"He'll take the Rolls," said Katharine, "and I'll have the *coupe*."

Giles hesitated.

"I had thought——" he began.

"Don't be Quixotic," said his wife. "You worship that car. Last time I drove her, you said——"

"Not before the child," said Giles. "I withdraw. Besides, I never meant it. I was all worked up, I was. You worked me."

"That all?" said Forsyth, hastily.

"Well, I shall take my sponge," said

said shortly. "I'll put in the usual covenants not to molest, pledge credit, er, er, etc., and myself as trustee. I suppose you want it at once?"

"As soon as you can," said Giles. "If we could have it to-night, we could go over it together, sign it, and I could push off to-morrow morning."

"I'll try. When you've signed it, return it to me. I'll send you copies to keep in a day or two's time. By the way, what's your address?" Captain



"You see, Mr. Forsyth," said Katharine, "we've made a hopeless mistake . . . In fact, the only thing we've agreed about for something like three months is that the sooner we part, the better for Giles and me."

Giles. "She's very kindly promised to let me use hers, if—er . . ."

By a superhuman effort Forsyth maintained his gravity.

"That sort of thing's understood," he

Festival mentioned a club. "Right." The lawyer rose to his feet and preceded the two to the door. "I'm sorry, you know, but I'm glad you came to me. Come again, whenever you please. I'll show no fear

nor favour—I promise you that. Let three be company, even if two's none."

They shook hands silently.

By one consent, Captain and Mrs. Festival drove straight to Bond Street and selected a gold cigarette-case. This was presently engraved and then delivered to an address in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

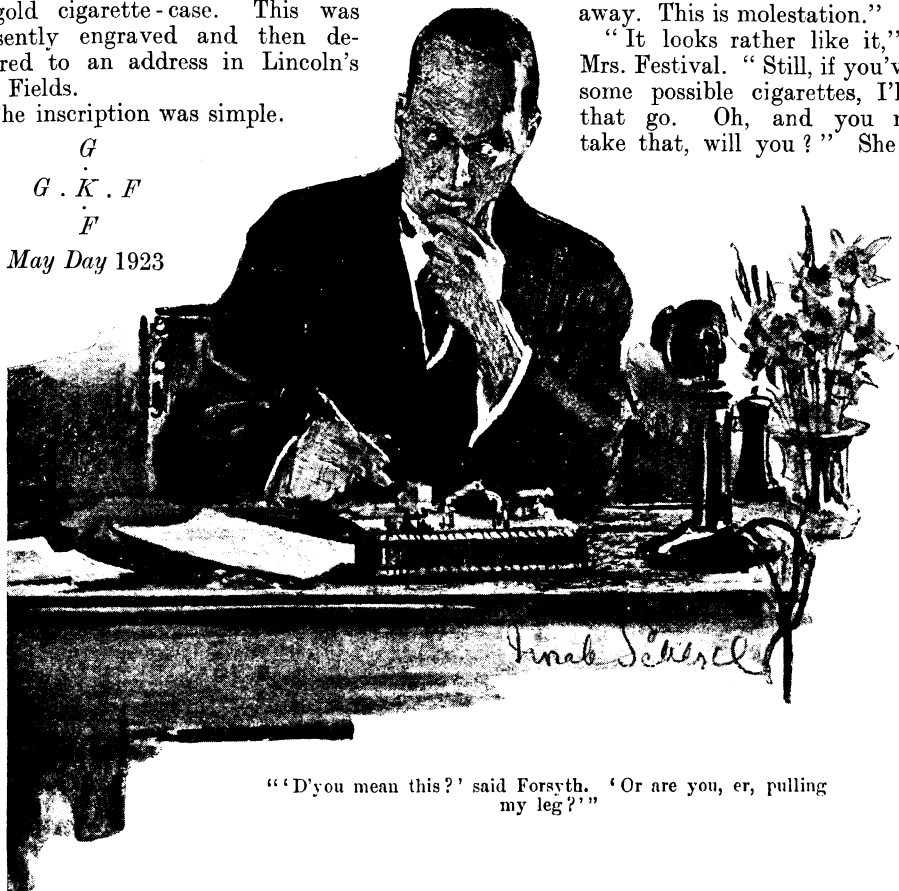
The inscription was simple.

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May Day 1923



"D'you mean this?" said Forsyth. "Or are you, er, pulling my leg?"

The news of the separation spread slowly. This was because it was wholly disbelieved. Everyone immediately assumed that Giles and Katharine Festival were being humorous.

The former was lectured upon "cruelty" at the Club.

The latter was mocked over the telephone.

"Is that you, Katharine? . . . I say, how many 'l's' are there in 'alimony'? . . . What? . . . Oh, but how sweet! . . . Never mind. Put a fiver on Decree Nisi for luck. . . ."

It was intolerable.

On the third day Katharine left Town—destination unknown.

On the fourth day Giles fled to Evian, leaving a note for his wife, to be delivered after he had gone.

On the fifth day they met on the shore of the lake of Geneva.

"Hullo, Gill," said Katharine. "How on earth did you know?"

"Know?" faltered Giles. "Go—go away. This is molestation."

"It looks rather like it," said Mrs. Festival. "Still, if you've got some possible cigarettes, I'll let that go. Oh, and you might take that, will you?" She gave

him a letter bearing his name and address. "It'll save my posting it."

It seemed ridiculous not to dine together. . . .

On the eighth day the papers announced:—

Captain and Mrs. Giles Festival have arrived at Evian-les-Bains.

This was misleading.

By the time the paragraph appeared, Giles was in Scotland. . . .

For the time, however, the *suggestio falsi* effectually throttled any inkling of the truth.

Indeed, it was not until the end of May that people began to appreciate that what they had regarded as a fiction was a stubborn *fait accompli*.

That such an estrangement should create

a profound sensation was natural enough. People could hardly believe their eyes or ears. Friends and acquaintances stared at the astounding truth, like stuck pigs. The projected divorce of an archbishop would not have occasioned one quarter of such amazement.

Again, it was natural enough that, having recovered her breath, Mayfair should prepare to let out a perfect squeal of dismay. Her sparrow was dead. The bear was robbed of its whelps.

The bellow, however, died on Society's lips.

Having rammed home the punch, Giles and Katharine proceeded to apply the healing balm.

In the first place, the linen they were washing in public was spotlessly clean. Secondly, the two laundered comfortably, without the slightest embarrassment. Thirdly, their cheerful disregard of the traditions of Separation turned the tragedy into *opéra bouffé*.

The general feeling of disappointment was still-born, to be immediately succeeded by a sense of bewildered relief.

Captain and Mrs. Festival became more popular than ever.

Isolated efforts to brand them died an inglorious death.

Mrs. Soulsden Clutch, who faithfully attended Divine Service at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, and had nagged and bullied her husband into another world, announced that words failed her, and then spoke long and authoritatively upon the advertisement of indecency and of contempt for marriage vows.

Mrs. Busby Shawl, surnamed 'The Comforter,' went further and cut the two in the Park, afterwards broadcasting her achievement with the innocent air of one who, blinded with integrity, has shamed the Devil and is now uncertain whether it was a Christian thing to do.

But the findings of such censors of morality were coldly received: and, after exchanging malice for the inside of a week, the latter reviled one another and elbowed and fought their way into what they had lately described as 'the House of Rimmon.'

The fun became fast and furious.

Joint invitations which had been jointly declined were re-issued severally and severally accepted. Invitations which had not been sent were hastily extended. The dates of parties, dances, week-ends

became actually contingent upon the Festivals' ability to attend.

The pets had become lion-cubs.

Katharine gave a dance.

Giles was invited, and gave a dinner beforehand, taking his guests on. He danced twice with his hostess, enjoyed champagne he had chosen, sat out in his own library.

Giles gave a luncheon, inviting eleven guests. Of these his wife made one, and, taking her proper precedence, sat on her husband's left. Afterwards, the Rolls being there, he dropped her at Sloane Street and was deliciously thanked.

That night they met at a ball in Belgrave Square, and the next week-end in Hampshire, as two of the Pleydells' guests.

On five days out of seven they junketed side by side.

On Derby Day they went to the Daneboroughs' dance—a brilliant affair, which blazed till nearly five on the following day. Its remembrance was slightly marred by Mrs. Festival's omission to take her latch-key and subsequent inability to 'make her servants hear.' Necessity knows no law. Giles, who had left early, was roused from a refreshing slumber by the night-porter of his Club and apprised of the facts. . . . There was only one thing to be done. He did it gallantly, with a suit over his pyjamas and pumps on his naked feet. The aggravated assault which he presently committed upon his own front door was audibly condemned by several infuriated residents in Berkeley Square. His butler, who had just got to sleep again, also condemned it with great savagery, but, after hoping against hope that the reinforcement his mistress had unearthed would also lose heart, himself at last succumbed to Captain Festival's importunity. . . . His work over, the latter returned to his Club, wondering whether he could with decency suggest that a duplicate latch-key should be kept at the nearest police station. He need not have troubled his head. The following day, a gong the size of a soup plate was installed beneath the butler's bedstead. Upon observing its dimensions, the butler was greatly moved, but, while declaring in the servants' hall that Katharine was no lady, he was forced to admit to himself that his mistress was no fool.

Out of the flood of their engagements, the two were careful to save one evening a week, upon which they dined together at their own house. Afterwards they sat in the

library until eleven o'clock. Then Giles would get up, and Katharine come to the door to see him out. Arrived at the threshold, her husband would kiss her fingers.

"Good night, sweetheart. Sleep well."

And the lady would answer gravely—

"Till next week, Gill. Good-bye."

One Thursday, half-way through June, such a meeting took place.

When coffee had been served, and the two were left to themselves,

"My dear," observed Giles, "let me thank you for a most toothsome repast."

"It isn't my fault," said his wife.

"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is."

"Oh, 'Cries of 'Shame,''" said Giles.

"'Cries of 'Shame' and 'Withdraw.'"

"Dinner of herbs"! Why, each of those

tournedos was a stalled ox in itself. And

no hatred, neither. That sole, too!"

He sighed memorially, raising thankful eyes.

"You know, we've beaten the sword into a fish-slice and the proverb into a cocked hat. Seriously, Kate, we've shown considerable skill."

"In reverting to the rank of private?"

Giles nodded.

"After being temporarily attached."

His wife regarded the tip of her cigarette.

"Ducks take to water," she said.

"And men take to drink," said Giles, "if they happen to be born thirsty. The point is——"

"Have another glass of port," said Katharine.

"No, thanks," said Giles. "Not that it

isn't excellent. It's—it's not of this world.

Uncle Fulke left it me. But let that pass.

The point is, you and I are naturally

gregarious. Our instinct is to flock. I like

someone to talk to while I'm getting up.

You like someone to obstruct while dressing

for dinner. Don't think I'm being rude.

The way in which you used to call me to

give you your towel, is among my most

treasured memories. Now, the curse of

solitude has fallen upon our toilets." He

spread out eloquent hands. "Yet, our

personalities survive. The first two or three

days, while shaving, the bath seemed a bit

empty, but——"

"They do more than survive," said

Katharine, tilting an exquisite chin. "To

judge from the quantity and quality of our

invitations, we cut more ice than before.

In fact, Fate's been properly stung. By

rights, we ought to be outcastes. As it

is . . ."

She let the sentence go and inhaled luxuriously.

"Exactly," said Giles. "It's because we sink our feelings. Instead of bleating——"

"Are you sure we're gregarious?" said Katharine.

"Of course we are," said Giles. "We

bleated because we were alone. We heard one

another bleating, and—and foregathered.

We were lonely, and hated the state. We

were and are gregarious. I repeat that the

way in which we have harked back to

celibacy does us infinite credit."

"Honour to whom honour is due," said

Mrs. Festival. "I'm not gregarious. I

thought I was. I thought I would like a

confidant—someone to cry my thoughts to

without having to think what I said, some-

one who'd give me my towel and—and

generally understand."

"In fact, a blinkin' soul-mate?"

"And towel-horse combined. Exactly.

Well, *I was wrong*."

"But you bleated," protested Giles. "I

heard you. You advertised for a soul-mate,

and I applied for the place. A waster by

nature, I presently let you down, but that's

irrelevant."

"It's also untrue," said his wife. "And

you know it. You never let anyone down.

Never mind. Gill, I'm afraid I married in

much the same frame of mind as I try a new

scent." The other started. "I've always

used *Baladeuse*, and always shall. But

now and again I go mad and waste your

substance on a bottle of something else.

Then, when I've used it twice, I give it to

Beatrice."

Considerably taken by surprise, her

husband regarded his ash-tray with an

offensive stare. Presently he sighed.

"At least," he murmured, "I escaped that

odious depository. . . ." Katharine began to

shake with laughter. "I see. Not to put

too fine an edge upon it, you married out

of pure curiosity. In a mad moment you

ventured out of spinsterhood just to see

what coverture was like. And I was under

the impression that—— Never mind. It's

a pretty simile. Perfume. I suppose I

was a sixpenny flask of '*Ard an' Bright*. . .

Oh, *très intéressant*." Releasing the ash-tray,

he shifted his gaze to the ceiling and, drawing

at his cigarette, meditatively expelled the

smoke. "Supposing," he added slowly,

"supposing—to preserve the parable—you

had another—er—*lapsus cordis*. . . got

momentarily sick of *Baladeuse* and, forgetful

of jolly old '*Ard an' Bright*, felt impelled to

try *What are the Wild Oats Saying*, or some other frankincense?"

Katharine shot her husband a lightning glance.

Then she raised her sweet eyebrows.

"And you?" she said. "Supposing you hear someone bleating . . . and . . . and the flocking instinct once more asserts itself?"

Deliberately, Giles extinguished his cigarette.

"I shall put up a fight," he said coolly, "the deuce of a fight. I shall stick in my elegant toes and put up a fight."

Katharine leaned forward.

"And I," she said slowly, with a dazzling smile, "shall do precisely the same."

For a moment the two looked into each other's eyes.

Then—

"I—I hope you'll win," said Giles, uneasily. "I mean—I should like to think that '*Ard an' Bright*' was the only serious rival *Baladeuse* ever had. Besides . . . I'm sure I shall win," he added confidently. "You can bet your little boots about that. You know. The patent-leather ones I used to pull off after breakfast."

Katharine rose to her feet.

"I'm going," she said, "to the library. Remember me to the port and then follow me in." Her husband stepped to the door and held it open. As she was passing, she stopped and laid a hand upon his arm. "Promise me one thing, Gill."

"Of course," said Giles, gallantly.

"Listen. If ever you hear someone bleat, don't come and dine here with me until—until the fight's over."

Her husband drew himself up.

"My darling," he said, "I give you my precious word." He hesitated. "And—and you'd put me off, wouldn't you, if—if anything looked like displacing *Baladeuse*?"

Katharine nodded.

* * * * *

Five crowded weeks had slipped by.

The Courts were over: Ascot had come and gone: another shining Henley had floated into the past.

People were beginning to collect their wraps. The carnival was nearly done.

Of late, the Festivals had not met nearly so much.

The reason for this is illuminating.

Each was declining a number of invitations.

Since, however, they never discussed their

engagements, Katharine imagined that Giles was still 'going strong,' while the latter, lying wakeful in bed, pictured his wife dancing night after night into the dawn.

Fantasy did not stop there.

They had made two of the house-party gathered at Castle Charing a fortnight before. The weather had been inviting, and Katharine and Pat Lafone had been inseparable. When they were not playing golf, they were out in the car. On two out of three evenings they had been badly late for dinner, arriving at the table breathless and simultaneously. And Pat was twenty-seven and full of life. He was also most attractive in looks and deeds. . . . Then the party had dispersed, and two days later Giles had passed the pair, riding together in the Row. . . . His wife had waved, and Pat had shouted joyfully, but Festival had winced.

There is an old superiority of horse over foot which, other things being equal, may make itself felt. It is, I suppose, traditional. The knight went mounted. It may, of course, be merely a matter of inches. The ability of the equestrian to look down upon such as go walking is not to be denied. His is a commanding position—of which the pedestrian may be ridiculously conscious.

Wishing very much that he had been riding, Giles told himself not to be a fool and, on reaching the Club, rang up Madrigal Chicle and asked her to lunch. Afterwards, he drove her to Hurlingham, passing Katharine upon the road.

Madrigal had been very civil at Castle Charing. Her husband had been killed in the War, after a month of wedlock. That was six years ago, and if Mrs. Chicle yet mourned, she mourned in secret. She was extremely good-looking and had a delightful laugh. . . .

The next day, the four met in Bond Street—with two open taxis between them. They exchanged appropriate banter. Katharine's and Giles' contributions were suspiciously bright.

The following Thursday morning Captain and Mrs. Festival received two several communications by the same post.

Wednesday Evening.

DEAR GILL,

I'm awfully sorry, but I'm afraid I must put you off to-morrow. I've had so many late nights lately that one more or less has come to matter quite a lot.

I'm sure you'll understand.

Yours,

KATE.

Though she did not say so, Mrs. Festival had spoiled three sheets of notepaper, phrasing that note.

Wednesday.

DEAR KATE,

Will you forgive me if I don't come to-morrow? Jonah wants me to play at Roehampton against the Red Hats, and they're sure to want me to dine and talk shop. You know.

Yours,

GILL.

That was Captain Festival's third attempt. Their reception of their respective bow-strings was anything but cordial.

Staring at the familiar handwriting, Katharine went very white.

"So," she said quietly. "Well, I've only myself to thank. I've whipped off the finest husband that ever a woman had—with the most natural result. . . . He's turning elsewhere. Madrigal, of course."

She bit her lip savagely.

Suddenly she remembered the letter she had written the night before.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she cried, and clapped her hand to her mouth. "He'll think I meant it, of course. *I meant him to, and he will.* It'll drive him into her arms! I've cleared his way! He'll have no compunction now. . . ."

She flung herself down on the bed and buried her face.

"Why did I write?" she wailed. "Why did I ever write? If only I'd waited . . . if only . . ."

She began to weep passionately.

Giles, fresh from his bath, stared at his letter as at a death-warrant.

He read it through twice, carefully.

Then he sat down on his bed, sweating, and read it again.

Then he lowered the document to his knee and sat staring at his wardrobe with eyes that saw nothing.

Finally, he gave a short laugh and, getting upon his feet, proceeded to brush his hair, whistling softly. . . .

Half-way through the operation, he started violently.

"*By George!*" he cried. "*That blasted letter of mine.* . . ."

Brushes in hand, he gazed at his reflection in the glass.

"Oh, you poisonous fool!" he hissed.

"You blundering, blunt-nosed idiot, you've put the burning lid on and screwed it down. You've torn it—bent it irreparably. Of course, she'll think I meant it. *I meant her to.* . . . And now—I've put myself out of Court. I've told her to run away and play. I've pushed her off!"

He closed his eyes and leaned heavily against the wall.

"Oh, Kate, Kate, Kate! . . . What have I done, my sweet? What have I done?"

* * * * *

Two hours had gone labouring, the second of which Captain Festival had spent perambulating Lincoln's Inn Fields and consulting his watch. His nervous demeanour was such that by ten o'clock he was being observed by the police. On the stroke of the hour, however, the suspect disappeared. . . .

As the door closed behind him—

"Forsyth," gasped Giles, "she's turned me down."

"No?"—incredulously.

"It's a shell-proof fact. And I've just tied it up, nailed it down and sunk it in the bright, blue sea. I warn you, I ought to be removed. I'm a public danger." He began to search his pockets with nervous inefficacy. "Where's that blinkin' letter gone?"

"Sit down," said Forsyth, indicating a chair. "And please begin at the beginning. I've another appointment in—"

"Now, don't rush me," said Giles. "I'm all of a doodah, I am. And if you rush me, I shall burst into tears." He mopped his brow feverishly. "About six weeks ago. . . ."

The tale came pelting.

The lawyer, who had given a frenzied Katharine an appointment for half-past ten, began to see daylight.

"And there you are," concluded Giles, violently. "That letter means she's attracted to Pat Lafone. I'll bet it cost her a hell of a lot to write it, because—well, it's a pretty thick thing to tell your husband, isn't it? And now she's had *my* letter, which tells her in so many words to count me out and go full blast ahead."

Forsyth fingered his chin.

"What did you write it for?"

"Ask the fowls of the air," said Giles, wearily. "They might be able to tell you. I can't. I suppose I had some rotten, weak-kneed idea of frightening her back into my arms. Of course, it was a hopeless thing to do. But when you're desperate you do do hopeless things."

"Why 'desperate'?" said Forsyth.

"Because I can't stand it," shouted his client. "I'm not a graven image. For nearly three blinkin' months I've stood and watched all London swarming about my wife: I've smirked and bowed and scraped and pretended I didn't care: I've sat up and begged, like the rest, for a dance or a smile: and once a blistering week I've met her across our own table and made imitation back-chat and done the grateful guest. . . . And the last three times I went there she gave me grocer's port." He raised his eyes to heaven and clenched his teeth. "If ever I get a chance, I'll break that butler's back. I believe that's half the reason I wrote that blasted note."

Here the telephone bell intervened.

"Excuse me," said Forsyth. "Yes? . . . Very well. Mr. Maple's out, isn't he? . . . Then show them into his room and ask them to wait."

As he replaced the receiver—

"What the devil am I to do?" said Captain Festival.

"Nothing," said Forsyth.

"*Nothing?*"

"Nothing."

"Oh, the man's mad," wailed Giles. "I've infected him."

"As you and your wife's trustee, I say that you can do nothing. You've covenanted not to molest. Your hands are tied. And now. . . ."

He rose to his feet.

"Forsyth," said Giles, "be human. D'you mean to say I've got to sit still and watch my wife push off with another man?"

"When you came here," said the lawyer, "seeking a deed of separation, I warned you both that you were playing with fire. You thanked me handsomely—and then deliberately instructed me to sow the wind." He shrugged his shoulders. "And now I must see this fellow. You sit here and smoke. I shan't be long."

He left the room, swiftly.

As he passed into Maple's room, Katharine rose at him.

"Mr. Forsyth, I've bought it. Giles has found somebody else. I never dreamed it was serious, but I got his letter this morning."

She thrust the mischievous document into his hand.

Forsyth read it carefully.

Ere he could open his mouth—

"He wrote that last night," said Katharine. "That means he's got off with Madrigal Chichele. And——"

"He doesn't say so," said Forsyth turning the letter about.

"I know. But it does. You can take it from me. Listen. Giles doesn't love her, really. Not yet, at any rate. He still loves me. But now that he thinks I don't care, she—she'll just romp home."

"Why should he think that?"

"I told him I didn't," cried Katharine. "In so many words."

Forsyth put a hand to his head.

"But if you do care, why did you——"

"Because I cared so much that I couldn't go on."

"Sit down, won't you?" said Forsyth, indicating a chair. "I can't give you long, for I've got someone waiting upstairs. But——"

"For Heaven's sake," wailed Katharine, "don't rush me. As it is, I'm beside myself. And if you——"

"Now, please go quietly," said Forsyth. "I'm going to state the facts. Correct me if I go wrong. Little dreaming that your husband had written this letter to you, you gave him to understand that, so far as you were concerned, he was free to place his affections where he pleased."

"Quite right."

"That you did in the hope of bringing him to your feet."

"Yes. It sounds insane, but women are funny like that."

"Your immediate fear is that, in view of the attachment which you say his letter discloses, your rash communication will have the opposite effect and drive him into a certain lady's arms."

"Exactly," said Katharine. "You've got a magician's brain, but let that pass. What, in Heaven's name, Mr. Forsyth, am I to do?"

"I think you must wait," said Forsyth.

"*Wait?*"

The lawyer nodded.

"You must wait for him to move."

"But he's *moving*," screamed Katharine. "He's moving into her arms. It's more than a million to one he's with her now."

"I hardly think——"

"Of course he is. And yet you tell me to wait!" Mrs. Festival threw back her head and pressed her hands to her eyes. "What d'you think I've been doing for the last three months? I'll tell you. I've been waiting. Waiting, waiting, waiting for Giles to come back. Waiting, with a jest on my tongue and a picture-postcard smile. Watching other women rushing after my husband,

biting and scratching and lying to catch his eye, cadding seats in his car, eating out of his hand. . . . Once a week he's come to our house as a guest. Once a week we've met across our own table and been polite—*polite!* The last two or three times I thought his manner seemed strained, as if he was upset about something. But I never dreamed. . . ." Her lips were trembling, and she stopped. The next moment she had herself in hand. "I tell you," she cried, "I've stood up and grinned and borne it, till I can't endure any more. I wrote that wretched note in desperation. I thought . . . I hoped. . . . And now you tell me to wait!"

"As you and your husband's trustee," said Forsyth faithfully, "I say that you can do nothing. You've covenanted not to molest."

"Oh, blow what I covenanted. I'm not going to be bound by any rotten papers. Besides, I never read it."

"You signed it," said Forsyth, mercilessly, getting upon his feet.

"Mr. Forsyth," said Katharine, "you told me to come to you if I was in trouble. Don't send me empty away."

"I must see these people," said Forsyth. "You stay where you are. I'm sorry I had no time to get any flowers, but you were rather precipitate. I'll tell you what," he added, as if voicing an afterthought. "Would you like to speak to your husband while I'm upstairs? You know. Just ring up casually, by way of clearing the air?"

"He's sure to be out," said Katharine. "With Mad——"

"We can but try," said Forsyth. "Of course, if you'd rather not. . . ."

"I'd love to," said Katharine. "I don't know what on earth I can say, but——"

"The time will provide the words," said Forsyth, and left the room. . . .

He found Giles pacing the floor, like a caged beast.

"While I've been away," he said quickly, "I've had an idea."

"Go on," said Giles, moistening his lips. "Go on."

"Would you like to ring your wife up?" "Captain Festival reflected."

Then—
"She won't be there," he said. "She's with Pat, for a monkey."

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders.
"You can try," he said. "Don't, if you don't want to, but I don't think a telephone

call is molestation, and, at least, you'd be in touch."

"All right," said Giles. "I don't know what to say, but——"

"I'll tell them to get you on," said Forsyth, opening the door.

"Here! Don't leave me," said Giles. "Don't go away. Supposing she's in?"

"Well, it's not much good if she isn't, is it?"

"D'you mind saying that again?" said Giles weakly. "I—I wasn't ready. Besides, you can't say 'isn't it is.' It's not euphonious. I—I say. . . ."

But the lawyer was gone.

Outside his own door, Forsyth leaned against the wall and bowed before a paroxysm of laughter as a reed before the gale. Then he pulled himself together and sought the switchboard.

"Put my room through to Mr. Maple's and ring them both up. Then plug me in. I want to overhear."

"Very good, sir."

After a moment's interval—

"Er—er—hullo," said Giles, wiping the sweat from his face. "Hullo."

"Is—is that you, Gill?" said Katharine, tremulously.

"Er—yes, dear. How—how are you?"

"Oh, all right, thanks. How—how are you?"

"Oh, full of beans, thanks. . . ."

There was a dreadful silence.

Forsyth began to shake with laughter.

"Are you there, Gill?"—anxiously.

"Yes, dear."

"That's right. I was afraid we'd been cut off."

"No, I'm here, all right. . . . How—how are you? Oh, I've said that, haven't I? I mean——"

"Are you sure you're all right, Gill?"

"Right as rain, dear, right as rain. Why?"

"I don't know," said Katharine. "I thought you sounded—er—not quite yourself."

"Well, I'm not really. I—I had a dream last night."

"Did you? What did you dream?"

"I—I forget now," stammered Giles. "But—you know. It's sort of unsettled me."

"Well, do be careful, dear. It worries me to hear you so—so unlike yourself."

"Does it? I mean—am I?"

Forsyth writhed.

"Gill, what is the matter?"

There was another silence.

Then—

"I say, Kate," said Giles.

"Yes?"

"I—I got your letter."

"Did you?" said Katharine. "So did I. I mean——"

"Yes?"

"What?" said Katharine, disconcertingly.

"I only said 'Yes,'" said Giles. "You know. *Pour encourager*. Go on, dear."

His wife braced herself.

"Gill."

"Yes, dear?"

"I rang you up to——"

"Did you?" said Giles. "When?"

"Now."

"Now? Oh, I see. I suppose they said I was out. Never mind."

"But why should they say you were out?"

"Well, mainly because," said Giles, "I don't happen to be in."

"Gill," cried his wife, "what on earth d'you mean?"

"Don't ask me," said Giles, desperately.

"I'm that badgered and bewildered, I can't think straight. As I was saying, I rang you up to——"

"When?" said Katharine.

A choking noise was succeeded by another silence.

With his eyes closed and tears running down his cheeks, Forsyth clung to his receiver, helplessly.

At length—

"Kate," said Captain Festival, in a hollow voice.

"Yes?"—faintly.

"Don't think I'm blaming you, darling, but I rather gather you're thinking of displacing *Baladeuse*."

"I'm *not*!" shrieked Katharine. "I'm *not*! It's—it's all a terrible mistake. I know you've heard someone bleating, but don't think——"

"I haven't!" yelled Giles. "It's false! No one's bleated for yiles—I mean mears. Not since you did. An' no one'll ever blinkin' well bleat again. . . . There! I'll make you a present of that. I've wanted to say it for months, but I didn't know how." Hurriedly Forsyth replaced his receiver. "And, as for *Baladeuse*—well, I'm thankful she's still on top—thankful, my darling. D'you hear? Thankful. . . . Of course, if at any time, in a mad moment, you felt like another dart at jolly old '*Ard an' Bright*. . . ."

For a second his wife hesitated.

Then she bent to the mouthpiece.

"*Ma-a-a*."

The noise Captain Festival made, descending the stairs, brought Katharine and Forsyth pell-mell into the hall.

Husband and wife stared at each other open-mouthed. . . .

The lawyer watched them in silence, one hand to his lips, the other behind his back.

Presently their gaze shifted and fell upon Forsyth.

"But what a man!" said Giles, laying his hands upon the lawyer's left arm.

"What a friend!" said Katharine, laying hers upon his right.

"What a trustee!" said Forsyth, raising his eyes to heaven.

"He's going to dine with us to-night," said Giles.

"Yes," said Katharine. "And we'll show him our bathroom."

"Two's company," said Forsyth, shaking his head.

"Thanks to you," said Giles, shaking his arm.

"So's three," said Katharine, shaking the other.

"That's over," said Forsyth, and sighed. "Here's the Deed."

"Oh, we're tired of that," said Katharine.

"Yes," said Giles. "We're going to give it to Beatrice."

Another complete story by

DORNFORD YATES

entitled

"THE GROOM OF THE CHAMBERS"

will appear in the next number.

TRIAL BY WATER

By EDWARD BUCKNELL

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

AS Dick and I got near the top of Honeypot Hill, the timber-drag came round the corner with a glorious jingle and clatter, every bell on each of the four great horses ringing, and every bit of brass on the harness winking in the sun. By the side of Smiler, the huge leader, strode old Abel Brake, with his bright red face framed in white hair. People talk a great deal about the masterful personalities of merchant princes, but some of them would have a long way to go to dominate Abel, if they met him, whip in hand, in charge of his team—five feet of sheer determination.

He threw us a gracious salutation, as we stepped back into the hedge to let them go by, and roared out a prophecy of more rain to come. Behind came his grandson, Joseph, keeping an eye on the shoe under the back wheel—a great block of a man, as mild as his grandfather is fierce. No one can get old Abel to disclose his age, though he is ready to admit that he “beant so spry as he was”; but Joseph is known to be rising thirty, so the old man must be well on in the seventies. As he passed us, Joseph grinned and was silent, as he mostly is.

“D’you believe in early marriages, Uncle Max?” said Dick, as we breasted the ascent and came out upon Long Barrow Down.

“Why?” I said. “Are you contemplating anything of the kind?”

“Not it!” said my nephew. “I hate girls.”

I suppose this is a natural attitude when one is fourteen, and fancied for a place in the junior house eleven next term.

“Gomer and I were up in High Wood yesterday evening,” he went on.

“What were you doing up there?” I broke in.

“Looking at the view,” said Dick, grinning.

“Well, for Heaven’s sake, don’t let the new keeper catch you at it!” I said.

“Oh, he’d gone to Wendlebury, in the spring-cart, to see about the pheasant coops,” Dick explained. “Besides, I heard

him telling the Squire that they’re overrun with rabbits, so it’s really a kindness to wire a few for them. Old Abel was up there with the drag, and he was telling Gomer about Joseph wanting to get married. ‘At his age!’ he says. He says *he* can’t belt no sense unto ‘un.”

Now, Abel can do things with horses that make me ashamed of my superficial education, but I had never suspected him of carrying patriarchal rule to such a length as this. The pair live alone in a tiny stone cottage by the river, with a door that I fancy is spoil from the ruins of the monastery, and I had heard it whispered that Joseph did the washing on Sunday, but this was a new insight into the family economy.

“Was Joseph present during the discussion?” I inquired.

“Oh, yes,” said Dick. “He never said a word—just sat and munched mangolds.”

“And who’s the lady?” I asked.

Dick broke into peals of laughter. “Oh, oh!” he squealed. “You’ll never guess! That’s the best joke of all! You’ll never guess!”

I made no attempt to do so. This sort of secret is not contained for long.

“It’s *Dorcas*!” he shouted at last, and exploded again.

I will admit that it was a shock. Dorcas, best of parlour-maids, but, perhaps, least fascinating of the many who had held that exacting post in my house under Mrs. Weeks’s sway. Dorcas, the austere! Dorcas, the last word in icy efficiency! Dorcas, the (I had to face it) no longer young! It was astounding, but it only showed how little we know of the lives of those nearest to us.

“What has Gomer got to say about it?” I said, when I had recovered my breath.

Dick went off into another paroxysm. “Gomer says,” he gasped, “Gomer says that he reckons if they do wed, *she’ll* take the whip to *he*!”

By this time we had reached the further

brow of the hill, and what I venture to think the finest view in the world lay spread out before us. Beneath our feet the land fell rolling away in a vast basin, rich with hanging coppices and chequered with hedgerows, in the midst of which, clustering about the delicate tracery of the church tower, shone the tumbled roofs of Wendlebury. Beyond, the same country stretched away into the haze, with here and there a sugar-loaf hill, crowned with a tuft of trees, and the vista was closed by a rampart of green downs, through breaches in which one saw outspread the silver gleam of the sea.

I never see this great sight without a feeling of emotion not far removed from tears, and one of the greatest claims my nephew has on my regard is that it affects him, too, in much the same way. We both stood silent, drinking in that beauty and peace, for some minutes.

Then Dick caught my arm. "Look, Uncle Max!" he exclaimed.

Away to the west an inky cloud was coming up at a great pace. Already puffs of wind were tossing the branches in the spinney at our backs. Without another word we turned and ran for home.

II.

ALL that night it poured in torrents, and I awoke the next morning to a steady deluge and a vague sense of uneasiness. The sight of Dorcas at breakfast refreshed, though it did not solve, the problem. I had an annoying feeling of responsibility for the future of this starched and disciplined figure, though what, if anything, I ought to do, was completely beyond me. And isn't all interference a mistake? No, I thought, running away from it won't help.

At last, half-way through my second pipe in the library, I pulled myself together, rang the bell, and asked to see Mrs. Weeks. During my occasionally inevitable interviews with my housekeeper I always feel that our positions ought really to be reversed—she is so efficient, I so apologetic. She so completely accepts, as a matter of course, my right to give orders and command the utmost consideration from the household, I so hesitatingly exercise it. I am afraid that she secretly thinks me a poor thing, oceans away from her ideal employer.

Mrs. Weeks presented herself, with her customary expression of anxious intelligence. I asked her whether she had heard of the rumoured engagement.

"Oh, *that*!" she said, brushing the whole affair aside. I was to have no fear that Dorcas would allow anything of that kind to interfere with her duties; she was not that kind of girl—wouldn't stay a day in this house if she were.

"Good Heavens, Mrs. Weeks," I exclaimed, "what sort of monster do you take me for? I'm not concerned about the work of the house—I'm only too thankful to leave all that entirely in your capable hands—but if Dorcas wishes to marry, she must be free to do so. I'm ashamed to confess that only yesterday did I hear of this for the first time."

Mrs. Weeks inquired reproachfully of the ceiling how a gentleman like myself should hear of such things.

"Well," I said fiercely, "I wish it to be understood that Dorcas is at liberty to do so at any time."

Mrs. Weeks, in a tone of respectful protest, suggested that I might wish to see Dorcas myself.

Very well, I said, I *would* see her, and instantly would have given worlds to have the words unsaid.

However, I was in for it now, and a minute later Dorcas was before me. Of the pair of us, she was unquestionably the more composed. There was an embarrassing silence. When I could endure this no longer, I drew a long breath, and began, with many halts and stumbles, to approach the very delicate subject. She listened for a while with knitted brows, until, perceiving at last the trend of my remarks, she gently took the conversation out of my hands.

Of course I hadn't heard. How should a gentleman like myself hear of such things?

"As for Joseph," she continued, "the man wants sperrit, but he's a proper enough man to himself, and we'd contrive to suit each other, I believe. 'Tis the old man, his granfer, sir, as be the stumbling-block, along o' him thinking as how I'd squander the bit o' money he have hid away somewheers." She laughed scornfully. "As if I'd lay a finger on it! But he's a old, old man, and have his fancies, as all do. But don't 'ee think no more of it. 'Twas kindly done, I'm sure, but us'll bring un round in time, never fear. Shall I put some more coal on the fire, sir?"

What a woman! I thought, when she had quietly closed the door, sinking, exhausted, into an armchair. As I did so, the door opened again, and Dick burst in.

"Uncle Max," he exclaimed, "the river's

rising every minute, and they think the mill-dam may burst, and Eli wants to know if he can go and help shore it up, and *can* Gomer and I go, too ? ”

I got up in a hurry and went out to the servants' hall, where Eli, my gardener, was talking in a low voice with a man from the mill, and Gomer, who ought to have been chopping wood in the barn. All three were glistening with rain, and little pools were forming at their feet on the stone floor.

A very few words were enough to outline the position. If the dam went, the lower houses of the town were in imminent danger, and a cloud-burst in the hills, it seemed, was putting an unheard-of strain on the dam.

Only waiting to fortify ourselves as best we could against the wet, we all set out, Eli and the miller's man with grave faces, Dick and Gomer full of pleasurable excitement.

The situation had not been over-estimated. A roaring yellow torrent swept along at the foot of the hill on which my house stands, and every fresh eddy crept further out across the meadows. Far out in the stream the pollard willows that marked the accustomed course stood up to their necks.

The miller, knee-deep in the flood, welcomed us with a shout, and gave his directions with the brevity and clearness of an expert. It was going to be tricky work, I could see, and I was glad to send Dick off to the Court for reinforcements, while I considered exactly what he could be set to do without danger to his life or my reputation as a safe uncle. By the time he returned with a party, headed by the butler himself, stout fellow, it had become evident that he must be kept clear of the dam. Fortunately, he was quite content to help his admired Gomer wheel stone from an old dry-built wall in the yard, while the rest of us strove and splashed by the mill-stream.

All that day we laboured, refreshed at noon by the miller, even Gomer, to whom this was not the same thing as the daily round, performing prodigies ; and it was a wet and weary company that gathered, in the early dusk, in my kitchen, to drink ale and hope for the best.

III.

I MUST have slept like a log, for Dick was a good ten minutes shaking my shoulder before he got me properly awake. He was fully dressed and fairly bubbling over.

“ Quick, Uncle Max ! ” he said, dancing with impatience. “ The dam's gone, and all the people in Silver Street are being flooded out ! ”

That brought me round in a flash. “ What's the time ? ” I asked, as I flung on some clothes and fumbled in the cupboard for my gum-boots.

“ Half-past one,” said Dick. “ D'you think anyone'll be drowned ? ”

“ Not if we can help it,” I said, and my mind flew to Abel and Joseph in their cottage below the bridge.

As we came out on to the landing, the house was full of low voices and pattering footsteps. The hall was lit up, and I had an apocalyptic vision of Mrs. Weeks in a purple dressing-gown that was a revelation in itself. The kitchen door was open, and gave forth a savour of wet clothes and the cries of countless babies.

Mrs. Weeks caught sight of us, and came forward in an agony of apprehension.

“ I don't know if I've done wrong, sir,” she panted. “ The poor souls were washed out of their very beds. I thought I might venture——”

“ Mrs. Weeks,” I replied, “ as usual, you are perfectly right. Do whatever you think necessary. You can put some of the babies into my bed,” I continued, my eye fixing itself on the front of that magnificent garment, hopelessly ruined by water and dirty, clutching little fingers. “ I leave the reputation of the house in your hands. Come on, Dick.” And we slammed the front door and ran off down the hill.

The rain had stopped, and a full moon shone out of a cloudless sky. Above, all was serenity, but the menacing roar of the river, clearly audible from my gate, contradicted the promise of the sky.

Silver Street runs along the very verge of the stream, and the cottages on the river side of the road are washed at the back by the current at any time ; but the path over the way is banked high up—testimony to past experience. On this path, now more like a quay, we found a large and sympathetic gathering. The street itself was the bed of a swirling torrent, wherein dark figures struggled against the tide, trying to steer to land various chairs and cupboards which had floated out of their homes. Among them I recognised Eli, heaving up to the path a table, which its grateful owner received above.

“ Is everyone safe, Eli ? ” I called.

“ Aye, sir, every jack rag o' 'em ! ”

shouted Eli, forcing his way across to where I stood. "Arl out, bating old Abel Brake, and he be set on biding where he be. The old man have clean forgot wheer he hid his money-bag, and not the Vicar hisself can move un. 'T'es a turble ramshackle house, and Heaven alone knoweth if 'twill stand up."

He heaved himself up on to the path.

"Mebbe er'd listen to you, sir, but 't'es a wonerful stomachy old varmint."

Together we pushed our way through the throng, Dick following, till we came opposite

to Abel's dwelling, where the crowd was thickest.

It was a striking picture. Perched astride the roof-tree, with his back set squarely against the chimney, sat the old man, his white hair and beard shining like silver in the moonlight. In his hand he carried his great carter's whip, which he cracked now and again in token of defiance. His grandson, mute but faithful, clung to the sloping roof of the wash-house. Below, in the midst of the flood (bless his heart!) stood the Vicar in fishing waders. He had



"Below, in the midst of the flood (bless his heart!) stood the Vicar."

evidently just concluded some expostulation as we came up, for Abel, with a crack of his whip, was replying in a respectful howl: "Beggen your pardon, sir, here I be and here I bide!"

The Vicar turned away, amid sympathetic murmurs from the audience, and a woman standing near me stigmatised Abel as an "onchristian old mummock."

At that moment we were amazed to behold a head and shoulders force themselves through one of the dormer windows. A gasp, loud enough to be heard above the noise of the waters, arose from the onlookers, and became a shout of encouragement as the remainder of the figure followed and, scrambling and clawing its way up

the old tiles, gained the ridge of the roof, and was identified as a woman's.

"Why," shrieked Dick, clutching me by the arm, "it's Dorcas!"



"Beggen your pardon, sir, here I be and here I bide!"

"Sure enough!" shouted Joseph, standing up in his excitement, and promptly sitting down again as the tiles slid under him. "And she've a-vound the stocken!"

It may be imagined with what *éclat* events moved after that; how we despaired of getting the marooned party ashore; how a ladder was found and pushed over, to bridge the torrent; how Gomer, amid frantic applause, crawled across with a rope, to lash it fast; how Dorcas was conveyed to land, and received with cheers and congratulations; and how Abel, resolutely refusing to loose his grasp of either whip or stocking, had to be hauled along the ladder like a sack of grain.

But the culminating moment of this memorable night was when Abel, straightening himself up with difficulty, and looking round upon the concourse, said deliberately:

"She'm a proper vitty maid, good now, neighbours. Her vound my stocken. Shall't marry Joseph so soon as you've a mind to, my dear. Now gie I a kiss!"

And Dorcas, between laughter and tears, subsided into the arms of her prospective grandfather-in-law.

IV.

THE wedding, which took place shortly after from my house, was the most popular function of its kind in Norton within living memory. A little difficulty arose when Abel announced his intention of giving the bride away; but, as she had no male relative capable of supporting the honour, the Vicar finally yielded on this point, to the general satisfaction. Irregular as the proceeding might be, it was felt that the climax would be incomplete without the old man's presence in some official capacity.

Two pictures stand out in my memory. The first is of the wedding-party driving off to church, all together in Jesse Jupp's wagonette, through a lane of delighted faces—Dorcas completely mistress of the situation in a grey dress and a hat like a harvest festival; Joseph freshly burnished and shining with soap, in our traditional wedding attire of black coat and blue trousers with black stripes; Abel in a

square-cut tail-coat; Gomer, who was to be best man, all collar and white rosette. All the men wore the tall hat of ceremony, Abel's being stupendous in its height of crown and curliness of brim. Only the growing influence of the bride, I heard, restrained him from carrying his whip—presumably as a means of identification.

The other great moment was when the procession moved up the nave, Dorcas on the arm of Abel, who touched his forehead to the Vicar from time to time as they advanced; while Gomer, arm in arm with the bridegroom, had the air of one who conducts an unwilling victim to the execution chamber.

Late that evening, when Dick had gone to bed, I strolled down the hill for a last breath of fresh air. Sounds of exceptional revelry proceeded from "The FitzUrse Arms," accompanied by the hammering of pewter pots. I drew back into the shadow and listened.

No sooner was silence restored than an aged but by no means untuneful voice was uplifted in song.

"Their was an old varmer, 'e 'ad en old cow," sang Abel, for he, unquestionably, it was.

"To keep 'er wa-arm 'e didn know 'ow,
So 'e built a barn var to ke-ep 'er warm—
An' a drap o' good zider won't do us no 'arm."

"Arm, me boys, 'arm; 'arm, me boys 'arm!" bellowed the company,

"A drap o' good zider won't do us no 'arm!"

Here the sound of footsteps made me look round, and then draw back still further out of sight. Dorcas and Joseph marched up to the door of the inn and entered.

A silence fell; then I heard Dorcas's voice, full of quiet authority. "Now, granfer!"

"I be a-comen, my dear," said Abel. "I got to do her will now, neighbours." The old man chuckled in high good humour. "She'm the mistress now, seemenly."

Amid a chorus of "Good nights," the trio emerged and turned homeward, the two tall hats bobbing down the road under the street-lamp, on either side of Dorcas's resolute figure.





"It made me tremble when I heard it, sitting there in that chair in the tropic night."

THE SOUL SONATA

By HARRY HARPER

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

"WHY, it's Isadore!"

And that wan shadow of a man, thin as a lath, frail in his drill suit, his face all dark, tragic eyes, and his wonderful musician's fingers—those fingers worth a king's ransom—giving the only strong, supple suggestion there was about him, had nodded apathetically, as though mind and body had been burned almost out of him by fierce, consuming fire. Then he had replied in a quiet, unsurprised voice—

"How d'you do, Carton?"

There you have it in a few words—my abounding, rather crude astonishment, his fatigue struggling with politeness.

Sitting, as I do now, at my window overlooking an English lawn, I am going back in my mind to the sweating, steaming, stagnant heat of that tributary of the great tropical river, and telling you the thing as it happened—the thing which, having experienced it, will never permit me to feel the same again.

What was I doing there, off even that small trickle of traffic that went to and fro on the broad yellow main river from the coast to Djoko-Pandu? Does it matter? I hardly think so to this tale, and I'm impatient to get to the heart of the business. There I was, in the big canoe, with half a dozen natives I'd picked out and knew I

could trust; and I'd got in the canoe, too, stored in an outfit, enough things to make encampments supportable for a day or so away from the steamer down the main river.

Why I turned up that tributary, though, is a thing that has puzzled me since. I looked at it. I looked at the cocoanut palms wilting in remorseless steam-bath heat, smelt in a powerful whiff that indescribable tropic odour—mysterious, enervating, intoxicating, sapping you of Northern energy and filling your mind with strange, half-repellent, nerveless content. Then, and even to-day I can't tell you why, except that I was at a loose end, I swung the canoe idly off the main river and glided up that tributary under the moist, hot shadow of the palms.

Just round the first bend—insects droning through the sluggish stillness—I sighted the clearing on the bank, the bamboo-walled, grass-thatched native huts, and Isadore, lonely figure in the tree-shadowed space, with dark, furtive figures as a background among huts that seemed struggling to keep back the invading undergrowth.

What knocked me out of my stride, you might say, when I clambered up that spongy, oozy bank and stood wiping off the sweat as it trickled downwards towards my eyes, was a sudden mind-picture of the last time I'd met Isadore. It was in Piccadilly, London—Isadore in a top-hat and morning coat just coming, if my memory serves, from some post-war exhibition of pictures at Burlington House. And now here he was before me in this tropic clearing, the only white man, so far as I knew, for miles and miles, hemmed in and isolated by dank, close-set, brooding forest.

Mind you, I and other friends had felt that from the day he came back from the war Isadore had been a changed man. He'd gone out of his own free will—music for the time having dried up in him—and his knowledge of languages had made him invaluable. But let a musician, a great musician, a man with a hyper-sensitive mind that impressions play on like he himself plays on his piano, go out there into that hell, and when he comes back again—well, is he likely to be the same?

There had been fixed, cruelly-graved lines on either side of Isadore's sensitive mouth when he came back from those scientific shambles, and there had been a look at the back of those big, dark eyes of his that made you feel you wanted to

take him away and do anything with him rather than that he should go on thinking the thoughts that must lie behind those eyes. Isadore wasn't one for saying much. He was a poor hand at words—jerky, fragmentary, queer. Where brain and personality spoke, and spoke gloriously, were in his music. Take him away from his piano and he was quiet, moody, uncommunicative. Yet, you must understand, we all liked him, and that was because we appreciated his genius, and the fact that his personality was passionately sincere.

So, away out there on that heat-bathed river bank, going up to him with extended hand, I said—

"Upon my soul, Isadore, are you real or just a heat-engendered spook?"

Isadore smiled faintly. He looked very ill, yet his fingers clasped mine with nervous strength. "Still in the flesh, Carton," he answered in a low voice.

"But what's the idea, my dear chap? Why do I find you here? Surely you've friends—white people, I mean—with you?"

Isadore merely shook his head, restless eyes roving the river.

I stood there feeling stupid, searching for another conventional question, and yet reckoning I must be up against something pretty strange.

"The last time I heard of you," said I, "you were playing in Prague."

"That's finished," answered Isadore constrainedly, his words seeming to imply some gap or void. "I worked off engagements, then I—I cut every link and strand. I should have gone farther away even than this," he added in an odd, detached tone, "if it had been feasible."

"Well, this is hardly Bond Street on a morning in the season, is it?"

Isadore looked vaguely puzzled. The flavour of humour missed him, as humour always had. It was his temperamental seriousness. Instead, he murmured in an uncertain voice—

"I can't quite imagine why you're here, Carton."

I was starting in with the tale, such as it was, glad of getting something ordinary to say, when, to my surprise—peremptorily but politely—he cut me short.

"It doesn't matter," he said wearily—oh, so wearily! "Don't trouble, please. It really doesn't matter, Carton. What I've crept away right out here for is just to get away from things that don't matter—from noises, disturbances, distractions, pin-

pricks that keep you from concentration, that waste the little time one has."

"But, Isadore—" I was blundering on, when he interrupted.

"It was just this, Carton, friend. My heart began to feel like lead back there. I began, believe me, to hate the sight even of the piano, the only thing I can live in or speak through. I knew I'd come to the crisis, so I threw up everything. I just wandered out as far as I could from those ravening beasts of what, with an irony that's pitiable, Carton, we still call our civilisation—beasts that learn nothing and forget nothing, that continue to drink men's blood, and have hearts of stone, even after those years of torment we were told were to alter everything."

I must, I'm afraid, have stood gaping, his words and manner seemed so strange. At any rate, a quite friendly, natural smile relaxed suddenly his white, strongly-marked features.

"Don't think me mad, Carton; I can see the doubt in your eyes. I'm not mad, old friend. I'm as sane as you are, only, whereas you still see a lot of things—preserve what one calls a sense of proportion—I can see only one thing now. Call it artistic absorption, if you like, but it is not madness. I've been living here months in the silence, listening to one great, unchanging, primeval voice. In the flesh, that is to say, I've been here. In the spirit, though, while the music has been coming and going in me, ebbing and flowing, I've been roaming—where? Who can say? But the strain, friend, has been terrific; my bodily strength has only just held out. Physically, I'm threadbare. I'm an empty shell—more spirit than flesh, Carton."

I could believe it, looking at him there, though my mind was groping awkwardly still as I ventured—

"But why, Isadore? What is it, old man? You must have been taxing yourself, alone in a climate like this, to the breaking-point."

It was with a low, grim little laugh that he answered—

"My poor body's been a machine, friend—an instrument kept going, from day to day, to serve one purpose, just like that piano I have in there?"

"A piano, Isadore, here?"

Isadore smiled again.

"A piano, truly, Carton. But come across under my roof with me, if you care to come. I've such bodily comforts, even

here, as are essential to the working of the brain."

So I found myself walking beside him for a moment in such silence that one heard the shufflings and the murmurings of the natives by the huts. Then, as though making a tremendous effort, Isadore threw off his constrained, self-centred air. He began to speak quickly, to gesticulate. He told me of the labours of getting his piano up from the coast as far as the steamer could go, then on along native trails parallel with the river, then of the insulators which kept the insects from working havoc with it, and also of the thin, partly metallic outer sheathing that kept some sort of tone in the instrument even in tropic heats.

"It'll serve my purpose, anyhow," said Isadore, lapsing quiet again as we stepped into the big, bare hut he'd had built for him, its roof higher than those of the natives', and with a roughly-constructed verandah facing riverwards.

Then—my mind still groping for the key to this mystery—we had a strange meal together, Isadore talking volubly one minute, and then, the next, his weary features falling into grave, sombre lines.

He accepted a cigar from me, twisting it in those wonderful fingers—strong, gentle, swift, unerring. Then, with a shuffling of chairs and with the lamp from within—the curtain of tropic darkness having fallen by this time around us—shining its light outward at our backs, we moved for a smoke upon the roughly-boarded verandah.

For a spell we sat in an utter quietness, but somehow, now, I felt the strain had become relaxed. So, I think, did Isadore, for presently he broke the stillness, speaking slowly and evidently without effort.

"There's a purpose, I take it, Carton—a touch of that purpose we accept without understanding—in your coming in upon me here like this."

I murmured that I felt so, too, and fell silent again. I sensed that he wanted to unburden himself, and instinct told me to do nothing to stem the tide.

Again there was a little silence. Then, picking his words, Isadore went on—

"For months, Carton, touring Europe on my recitals, and looking into the faces of men, I found myself asking this: 'Where is the inspiration?' 'Where is the new spirit, the new hope, the new life?' You'll understand me, I know. Bathe the world in blood, friend, desolate, devastate, set men struggling to keep back the very devils from

the pit, and you should emerge re-vitalised, re-born, with eyes seeing the great world purpose anew.

"But there was no inspiration—none anywhere. There was no vision, no glimmering, Carton, of any new immortal flame. I felt it everywhere when I played; I felt it when I walked abroad. And I grew numbed day by day and desolate. My heart ached, friend. The tears came into my eyes. All that suffering, all that terror, all those graves stark in the moonlight, and the great new note not struck, the flame unkindled!

"It was in a train one night, the harsh song of the wheels weaving into my thoughts, that the veil seemed torn aside. It was a mere glimpse, just a moment's freedom from this dull, mortal vision of ours, but it was enough."

Springing up as he spoke, and tossing his half-smoked cigar into the darkness, Isadore paced restlessly to the verandah's end, and then swung round to face me.

"Music, friend—the ultimate, marvellous inspirer and consoler. There's the key! The music that tears and strips away our dull, prosaic, everyday sheathing of pettiness and puerility. The music that sets us a-tremble, that flows through us an invisible, soul-stirring stream; that turns a little, mortal, finite brain—while the inspiration is there—into an instrument the divine purpose itself can work through."

Slowly, as though the immensity of his thoughts, struggling to find utterance, fatigued him, Isadore moved back and sank into his chair.

"Yes, Carton, it was in that train that night I saw my task. Fantastic it seemed at first, but the call was inexorable. It overwhelmed me. It made everything else seem just nothing."

His voice trailed away momentarily, but I waited patiently, without risking jarring words.

"The sonata—my sonata—the great trumpet-call through the emotions not to one man or one nation, but to the men of the entire world. That was my obsession. To compose—to say in music that something the disillusioned, drifting world is aching to hear; to tell weary, spiritless men that it is, after all, worth while, that the goal is there, shining out ahead, though neither they, nor their sons, nor perhaps countless generations, will come up level with it.

"That was what drove me here, out to the uttermost silence. It's here, day by day,

that I've been composing. It's been no ordinary human task, Carton. I've sat there at that keyboard, and music has flowed into my brain and out at my fingers. I've been the little human machine, friend, tuned and responsive to that something we know of in our hearts, but cannot form in words."

"To re-inspire the world by music, Isadore. I think I see the idea."

I spoke quietly, encouragingly.

Isadore murmured some reply, but in a voice so low I could not catch the words. Then, speaking again firmly and clearly, he continued—

"'The Soul Sonata'! That's what I shall call it. It's the clarion call, friend. No words fit it. No human tongue can express it. And, that being so, why should I sit here fumbling with mere words? Listen, Carton, to the voice which speaks without words. Just sit where you are and listen."

With a swift, impulsive rush, he sped from the verandah into the room within. There was a scraping of a stool, a chord or so striking out weirdly into that tropic darkness, and then Isadore, that wonderful musician, began to play.

As for me, what can I say? I was there, I heard it, and, having heard it, can I ever feel the same again? I cannot. There is that in me, that little spark of immortality which, once having vibrated and responded as it did that night, can never sink into lethargy again.

It was in the mind's eye—that cinematograph, shall we say, of the soul?—that I saw it all as I sat there in the darkness, listening to such music as I had never heard before and shall never hear again.

Those first furtive, slippery, cold beginnings of human life, away, away back in times which it makes you feel empty and void even to think of. And this thing moved. It was harsh, brutal, lustful, crude—the very beginnings of anything like a life as we know it now.

And then you seemed to sense purpose in it—a groping, fumbling intelligence. The music moved again—took shape, as one might say. Oh, it was fine, that! It echoes in my mind as I sit here at my quiet desk. But it is formless now—just an echo.

And it went marching on. You got a sense of the beat of countless feet. You seemed to see great partially-trained armies go marching by in clouds of dust. I thought of the barbarians and of the walls

of ancient Carthage, and of great, fierce, bloody, crudely-cruel battlefields.

And then, almost like the arresting cry of something new-born, I detected for the first time a high, clear, pure note. It was the motif, weaving itself into that pulse-stirring, ceaseless march of those vast armies of men long gone. Here was the inspiration! Here was the purpose more than human!

How shall I describe it—that thin, high, distant, silvery bugle-call? It came to my brain, in a flash, that here was what something in me had always been listening for and yet had never heard before. It made me tremble when I heard it, sitting there in that chair in the tropic night. It was the note unearthly. And yet I could not have said why I trembled. It touched me to the core; and when there came a great ensuing thunder of music like an avalanche, drowning all else in its clamorous might, I found myself listening, listening, listening for that call which should point again the way—which should pierce the darkness with its light.

And it came. Higher this time, fuller, calling more plainly. It crept to my inmost heart. It made me breathe deeply. It was all that I'd ever thought, all that I'd ever aspired to, all that "I" which was mind and not body. And so it came and went, growing more beautiful and more persuasive, through the triumphs and the sorrows, the wailings and the harsh, grim, bestial conflicts.

I sat there transformed. I seemed to shake off my weight of flesh. I was there and yet I was everywhere; I was human and yet I was immortal—universal. The music seemed to bathe me, to flood round me. I was conscious and yet in a dream. And the next thing I remember is the echoing silence as the music ceased, and there came Isadore's voice, exulting, tremulous with the triumph of the artist who is carried away by his own conception—

"Carton, Carton, what do you say to that, man? What do you say to the unutterable made understandable? What do you say to life short-circuited, shown in one blinding flash? Why do we live? Why do we strive? Is it for one thing, or is it for any specific number of things? No, friend, it is for all. It is for the great, marching, unfathomable movement that goes on and on down the ages, that is beautiful, tender, terrible, cruel, that has joy even in its pain, that——"

The words seemed cut from his lips as he sprang from the piano-stool and swung facing me near the lamp-lit table. He clapped one hand to his side, and, as he did so, I saw he had the music of his sonata in the other hand. Then he slipped, with an exclamation of pain, recovered himself, slipped again, clutching at the table, and fell limply to the floor. And, as he fell, table and lamp crashed also to the floor, and the hut was plunged in darkness.

In a flash, recovering from the shock, I was across the verandah and into the room, fumbling for him.

"My heart it is, Carton!" he gasped. "The other day——"

The words were strangled in a choking gasp. Very swiftly and yet gently I gathered him up and bore him out into the open air. As I passed the overturned table, I glimpsed a little lick of flame from the fallen lamp, and, stamping at it, saw, as I thought, that it had been extinguished. Then, Isadore limp and comatose in my arms, my thoughts flew to my little medicine-chest in the canoe, and I shouted to the sleeping boys on the river-bank. Following which there was a sudden bustle and a swift running of feet, and as I bent over him Isadore opened his eyes and strove to speak.

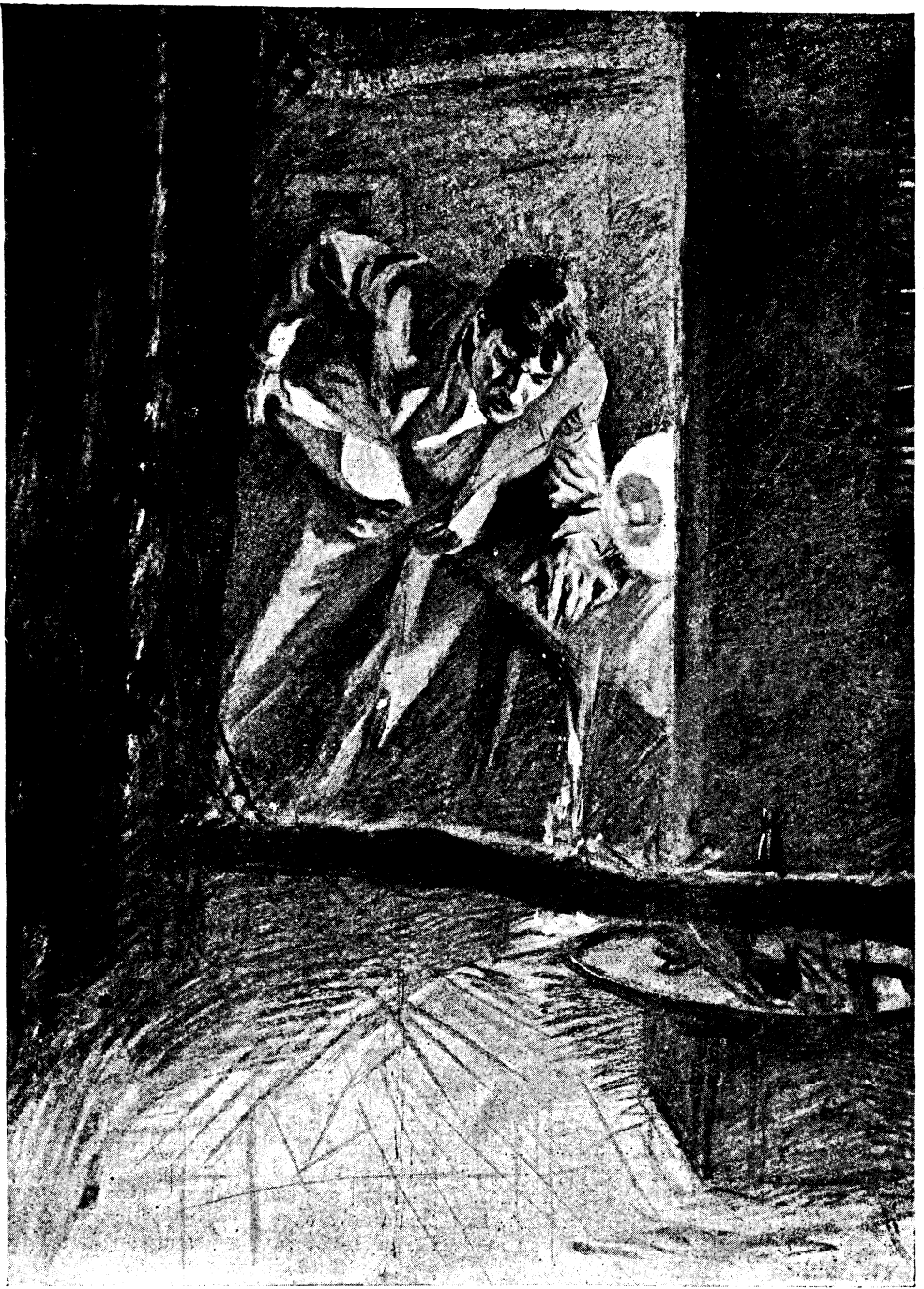
I lowered my head to catch his words, and, as I did so, became aware of a sudden glow behind me. At the same moment, brokenly, words rose to Isadore's lips.

"Carton—quick, man! Never mind me! My music, Carton! Look!"

His head was turned sideways, looking behind me, and as I swung to look also, I gave a cry and sprang erect. That flicker I thought I had stamped out had, seizing hungrily on woodwork tinder-dry with heat, blazed up within the hut in a blinding, incredibly-growing sheet of flame. Instantly I realised the urgency of Isadore's cry. His music manuscript, dropped to the floor as he fell, lay somewhere within reach of those fiendishly-spreading flames.

I leapt forward. Head bent, arms spread shieldingly over my face, I lunged across the oven-hot verandah and sought to force my way through the doorway.

The heat already was blistering, intolerable. Flames shot their red tongues towards me. My breath caught and choked in my throat. Twice I staggered forward and twice, flesh and blood revolting, I cowered back. And with unbelievable rapidity those flame-fiends rushed, spreading here and there.

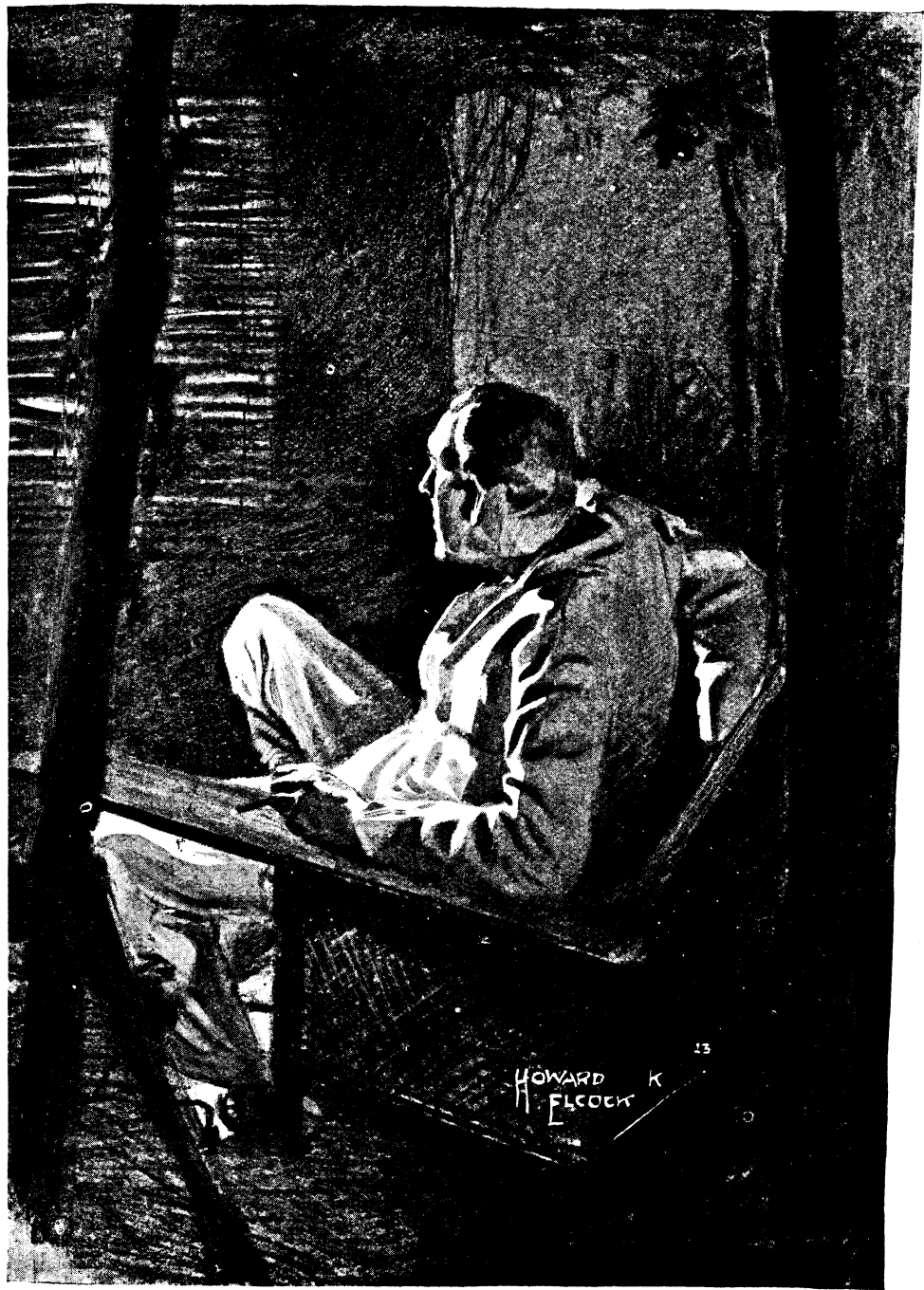


“‘Carton—quick, man! Never mind me! My music, Carton! Look!’”

Guttural cries there were behind me now. The whole night seemed a pandemonium of noise, of gleaming flames and pitch-black darkness.

For a third time, throwing my coat upwards over my head, I made a desperate,

groping lunge to reach the centre of the hut. But it was not to be. I fell on my hands and knees, my senses reeled. There was a crash as burnt-out floor-boards split in showers of sparks, and then, my brain misty, I just remember myself being pulled,



"As I swung to look also, I gave a cry and sprang erect."

struggling blindly, to the outer air by the panic-stricken efforts of my boys from the canoe. And that hut of Isadore's, riven and engulfed, vanished in a roaring pillar of fire.

* * * * *

How can I write it? How can I tell you

how I stood, chilled, numbed, and wordless, facing the dawn when it came?

Isadore, that poor, overdriven heart of his having ceased to beat, lay peacefully dead among the rising glories of the new-born day, and behind me somewhere—

there amid blackened ruins we had searched and searched in vain—lay the charred, destroyed manuscript of that marvellous music, of that sonata of the soul which I alone had heard.

Could there, I found myself questioning, have been Fate in it? Was Isadore, with that witchcraft music of his, presuming upon some inexorable purpose of the mighty unknown? Was he anticipating with his irresistible clarion call?

Who can say? But I, at least, for one, have heard that message. I have seen, in

my mind's eye, that torch-light of the soul held high. And what one man can do, by pen, by word of mouth—by ceaseless strivings where such strivings lie—that I am doing, and shall do as long as life is in me, to preach poor Isadore's music-gospel; that gospel which tells us never to lose our idealism, to play smilingly and gladly our little part in the great, mighty march of countless feet—many of them aching and weary—to the unknown goal which beckoned, beautiful though elusive, through that marvellous lost sonata in the stillness of the tropic night.

A QUERY OF ETERNAL AUTUMN.

O WIZARD of the weather-wand,
Why so beguile us gently innocent?
Why with a ripple on the stilly pond
Prevent
The Winter's punishment?

When the last sheaf is warmly caught
Within the granary,
Untrusting of a turncoat clime,
Nor by the vane's caprice untought,
To 'ware the treachery
And drink deep in the golden cup of time,
We wait the burden of the gales
A-tumble down a hundred vales.

O laughing wizard-man who mocks
At careful weather fools,
No thunder of the equinox
Stirred the unslumbering pools;
The wet earth listened for the rain
In vain.

A thrush among the chimney-pots
Sings clear and loud of April dawns,
Conspiring rabbits, at their plots,
Will scurry from forbidden lawns
No quicker than the frost o' night
Slips off at morning's brave delight.

O mocker in the sunlight of high hills!
Now send thy bolt,
Now give us gage of wintry ills,
Prepare the pall,
Lest we, inebriate, revolt
And slip
As vagrant swallows dip
Upon the wing,
From this soft, muffled shroud of funeral
Into the sharp green garment of the Spring.

LOIS VIDAL.

AN ELEPHANT KRAAL

A GREAT ROUND-UP OF CEYLON'S GIANT ANIMALS

By FRED A. ELLIS

AN article of remarkable interest as describing for the first time the methods of the great round-up of wild elephants, known as a "kraal," held at stated intervals in Ceylon. The author, well known as a big game hunter, obtained, for the first time, permission to make a camera record of the whole operations. The kraal is an event of supreme interest to the Cingalees, as ridding the island of a surplus of these great animals, and also because of the pecuniary rewards attendant upon the delicate operation of snaring the numbers of elephants gathered together at one round-up.

Photographs by J. Rosenthal, selected from the unique series of motion pictures "The Great Elephant Kraal at Kurunegala," and reproduced by kind permission of Moss' Empires, Ltd.

THERE are few jobs so exciting and wonderful as an elephant "kraal," or round-up, an occasion when numbers of these gigantic animals are driven into specially-prepared enclosures. That is one operation: a far more delicate and amazing one is the taming process carried out by tame elephants.

I have taken part in several of these kraals in Ceylon, where the operation is brought to perfection, and I was most anxious to obtain a camera record of the whole proceedings. To obtain this I had to approach the Government Agent, who has charge of the kraal, and at first he was apprehensive that the cameras might alarm the animals. Having quieted these fears, I got my permit, and at once set to work to make my plans. The result is seen partially in the pictures printed with this article, but of course the full record cannot be shown for lack of space.

To organise a kraal is a vast business. Although the island of Ceylon is comparatively small, it contains an amazing number of wild elephants. If not kept down, they increase prodigiously, and the damage caused to the crops is most grievous. Hence the periodical kraal carried out by the Government with the co-operation of the Cingalee noblemen and the natives.

When many complaints of damage have been made to the *ratmahatma*, or high noble, he lays a complaint before the Government Agent, who investigates the matter. If the damage appears to be serious and general,

orders are issued for a kraal. Immediately all is excitement and anticipation.

Having fixed a site for the kraal, the Government Agent applies to the Governor of the island for permission to cut the necessary timber, etc., for the stockades, stands, bungalows for helpers, etc. The next point to be decided is a delicate one—what proportion of the captured elephants shall be allotted to the nobles who lend their tame or "decoy" elephants. This is a lengthy business, and requires much firmness and tact.

Men are next sent from each district to scour the jungle. Then gradually the various herds are located and encircled. Three thousand beaters alone were employed on the kraal I am now describing. They were armed with old flint-guns, spears, poles, etc. From the moment of encircling, the elephants are allowed no peace. The beaters rattle drums, bellow loudly, strike the trees with their spears, and, should the animals attempt to double back, fire their ancient weapons with a deafening report. At night the scene is a weird and dangerous one, and it requires nerve to face the crashing of the frightened elephants, who are now "getting the wind up" very badly, and may decide to break through the narrowing circle at any cost.

Finally the crisis of the beating operations arrives. Word is given that the elephants are to be shepherded into the kraal stockade. The selection of the site for the stockades is of vital importance. Elephants travel

well-defined paths in the jungle, made by their passage to streams and water-holes, therefore the stockade must be fashioned to enclose one of these streams, and must be on the direct line of one of these well-worn pathways.

The construction of the stockades is a business calling for patience and a knowledge of the marvellous sagacity of the elephant. The timber used must be exactly similar to that prevailing in the locality: if the stockade is constructed of strange wood, the elephants would refuse to be shepherded into it. Even the screens of leaves,

branches broken from trees in the neighbourhood.

The stockade has two entrances in case of accident, the main entrance and an emergency one. While the stockade is being made, accommodation must be provided for the different nobles, the Governor of the island, and the many officials who are invited to see the "noosing" (the wonderful evolutions of the tame elephants in getting the wild brutes out of the trap) *after* the round-up is completed.

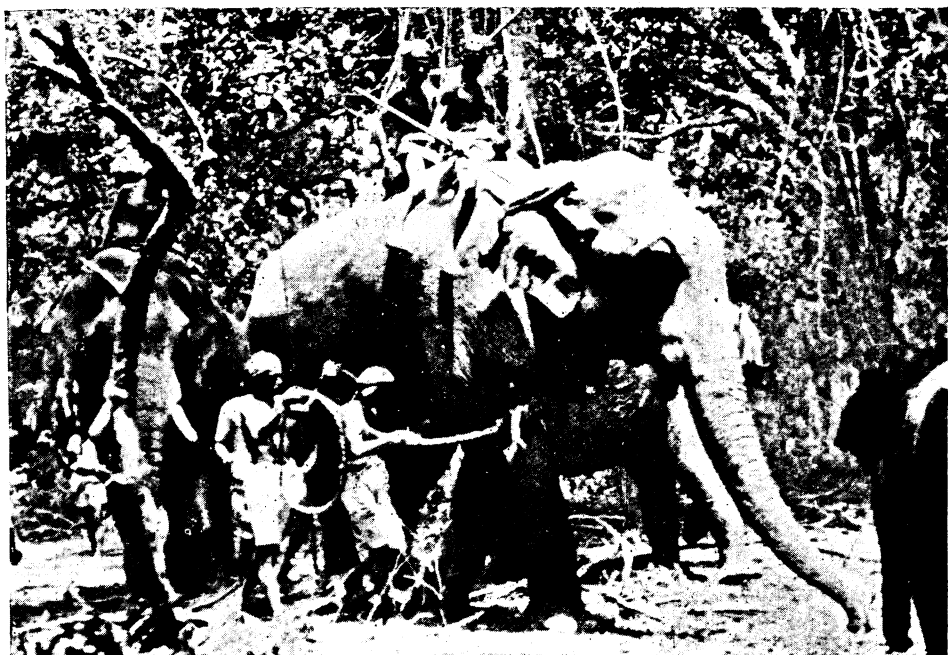
First a road must be constructed that will carry innumerable bullock carts, motors,



DECOY ELEPHANTS CROSSING A RIVER ON THE WAY TO THE KRAAL.

branches, etc., must be identical with those known to the elephants. Trees are felled and the bark removed, holes are dug and the trees sunk in the ground upright, with other trees as cross-supports, and larger trees at about six-feet intervals as resistance posts. Not one nail, iron clamp, or wire rope must be used: the whole structure is bound together with split rattan. Everything used to stem the mad rush of the frightened brutes, when they realise they are trapped, is found in the jungle where the kraal is made. When the stockade and guiding wings which lead into it are completed, all are camouflaged by

including, on the occasion which I am describing, my "tin Lizzie," carrying my outfit. This had to be driven through three miles of virgin jungle. Hundreds of coolies were employed for six weeks on this job alone. Then kraal town has to be erected. It contains the Governor's house, bungalows, post office with telegraph, rest-house, and *botiques* (small native shops). The general public are rigorously excluded from the proceedings, as the work of shepherding and holding the gigantic brutes when panic seizes them is a highly dangerous one. The post office opens on the day previous to the drive, and letters are promptly delivered.



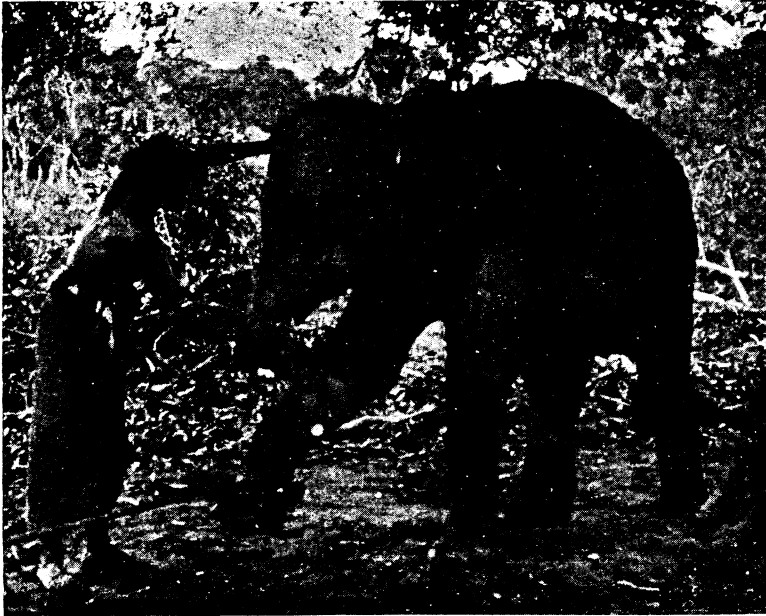
NOOSERS WALKING ALONGSIDE A TRAINED ELEPHANT READY TO CONNECT THE ROPE ROUND ITS NECK WITH THE LEG OF ONE OF THE WILD HERD.



BRINGING A TROUBLESOME CAPTIVE OUT OF THE STOCKADE BETWEEN TWO TAME ELEPHANTS.

Everything being in readiness, word is sent to the beaters to "drive in." The usual hour is daybreak. The few privileged persons take up their positions. Not a sound must be made or a cigarette lit; all is nervous tension, for the herd is seen dimly in the distance. The clamour of the beaters grows more deafening. Suddenly a great crashing is heard, and an old cow and her calf break through and look round and trumpet. Then a big bull, evidently the leader of the herd, crashes out into the open, and, seeing the well-worn path, follows it and then waits.

Again the din sounds more terrific, and



IN TRAINING A MONTH AFTER CAPTURE.

through the mass of the undergrowth appears the advance-guard of the mighty herd of driven animals. This is the critical moment. Will they enter the wings? The noise grows in volume, and several shots ring out. That decides them, and, seeing the bull dash off, the whole herd follow, following the way between the wings, entering the funnel-shaped enclosure at the top of which is the entrance to the kraal.

No sooner is the whole herd safely within the kraal proper than tree logs are placed in position against the posts, and the mass of animals are trapped. Then beaters surround the whole kraal to repel any attempts to break through. Directly the elephants

are kraaled, runners are sent to the police post, with authority to allow the public to proceed to the stockades to watch the "noosing," and the thousands who have been waiting for permission make a dash along the jungle road.

After a lapse of two or three hours, to give the Governor, the nobles, and others time to take their places in the stands that are built to overlook the stockades, the really exciting part of the business begins.

Now on the scene come the tame or "decoy" elephants, and the sagacity they exhibit is simply wonderful. The training of these animals occupies years, and much

money is spent on them. A strong chain is wound three times round the neck of the decoy elephant, and to this is fastened a raw-hide rope with a running noose. These special ropes are made in only one village in Ceylon.

All being ready, the decoy is unshackled, and with the mahout on his back and the nooser walking by his side holding the rope, a start is made for the stockade. Before these operations commence, however, the elephant and his attendants

kneel before a little shrine to offer up a prayer for success and safety. As the decoy elephants (who are "decoys" only in the sense of acting as protection to the nooser in approaching the angry wild animals) enter the stockade, one can notice the wave of fear and fury that runs through the mass of struggling beasts, for it is a well-known fact that wild elephants are afraid of tame ones.

By this time the frantic movements of the imprisoned animals have torn down most of the foliage and leaves that have been entwined round the stockade, and we can get a full view of what is taking place inside. It is an amazing spectacle.



HOW TO MOUNT AN ELEPHANT.

The decoys, with their noosers, form into a line and move with ponderous precision towards the herd. The wild elephants halt, stand stock still for a few moments, and then make a mad dash to get out. Immediately they are met by the firm front of the beaters, who with spears keep them from breaking through. Now is the opportunity the nooser has been waiting for. He selects a monstrous beast, and when its hind leg is in the air for a second, slips the noose round it. He gives a quick word of command,

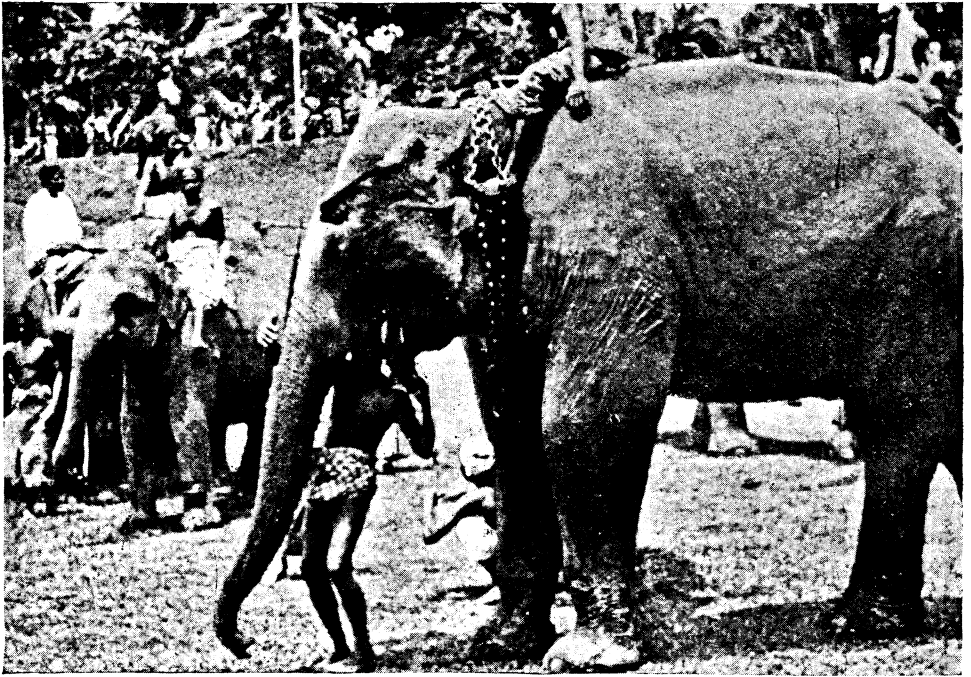


AN ELEPHANT CARRYING A TREE AFTER FELLING IT,

and the clever decoy strains back on the rope, and the first capture is made. Gradually the captive is pulled backwards, although struggling furiously and trumpeting at the top of his voice. Often a captive will throw himself on the ground, but with the aid of an old tame tusker he is practically lifted off the ground and compelled to submit. Gradually he is drawn back to a stout tree, and a decoy ranges on either side, with a tusker in front. A strain is still kept on the rope, while other noosers with new hempen ropes make both hind legs fast to the base of

inches nearer, and I should have been smashed to a pulp. I had failed to notice a giant bull tied to a tree, but he had seen me, and had swung round with murder in his little eyes. Among the elephants captured was a very young cow with a tiny calf. These were allowed to go free, to the great satisfaction of the ladies of the Governor's party who were witnessing the noosing.

There followed the apportioning of the elephants to the chiefs who have helped in the kraal. After this the remainder are auctioned on the spot. The prices obtained



CONFIDENCE PERSONIFIED: A MAHOUT PUTTING HIS HEAD IN AN ELEPHANT'S MOUTH.

the tree. This is the procedure, and it is applied again and again until the whole of the herd has been secured.

The kraal is now full of monstrous captives straining furiously at their bonds and trumpeting in impotent wrath. It was at this period that I myself had a narrow escape from death. My camera man had already gone into the stockade with a tripod, and I was following with the camera, so that we could have a close-up view of the struggling animals. Suddenly I heard a voice shout out "Look out!" and I involuntarily jumped sideways. I heard also the whizz of a huge trunk in the air. A few

varied from 300 rupees (£20) to 825 rupees (£55), with the proviso that the purchasers must provide decoy elephants to remove their newly-acquired charges from the stockade.

The removal of the captives is another dangerous and exciting episode. The decoys range themselves on each side of a captive, with another in front. Hempen rope one inch thick is slipped under his forequarters and round his neck, and made fast to the decoy on each side. The tug-of-war then begins. The captive resists, but is simply hauled along by the decoy elephant on each side, while the attendant tusker gives him



A TRIAL OF STRENGTH BETWEEN TWO HEAVYWEIGHTS.

some terrific bumps to show that he has got to get a move on. Finally he is got out of the stockade, and then the taming process begins.

Hunger is the great cure for sullen wild elephants. Starvation is tried first. Then

after a day or two a tame animal approaches with a succulent piece of foliage or some bananas. Like a naughty child, the captive will refuse "to be friends." The dainties are taken away. Gradually the wild creature learns that bad manners mean no food,



DARBY AND JOAN.

and the process of taming is soon accomplished. Within a few months they are docile, and are quickly taught to do various kinds of heavy hauling work.

It may be stated that the kraal is an event of widespread interest to the native

population of Ceylon, serving, as it does, the purpose of reducing the surplus of elephants, and also because of the pecuniary rewards incidental to the operation of snaring them at a round-up such as is here described.



SAINT MICHAEL'S FLOWER.

OF all the bloom that blazes
 To pleasure lad and lass,
 I love the eye that gazes
 From borders of the grass,
 The purple-lidded daisies
 That ope on Michaelmas.

When thorns are scarlet-fruited,
 And slowly on his round
 Goes Autumn sombre-suited
 In robes of windy sound,
 Forth come these tangle-rooted
 Tall raiders of the ground.

Their wormy roots ran straightly
 Through sodden earth to slay
 The ranked weeds that lately
 Beset them on their way,
 And now they stand up stately
 Upon Saint Michael's day.

And I my sickle sparing,
 Gold eye and purple lid
 Now stand upright and baring
 Their loveliness long hid,
 Like lasses home from fairing
 Whom lover-lads have chid.

Yet through the tangle fated
 Their roots I will divide
 Ere golden eyes dilated
 Shall gladden groom and bride,
 When homeward they come mated
 Upon Saint Michael's tide.

WILFRID THORLEY.



"He was gazing upward earnestly and with his hands extracting uncouth, wailing sounds from some unrecognisable instrument."

MATCHMAKER'S LUCK

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

MR. JOSHUA PEEVEY was standing in his doorway, his hands folded upon his apron, his gaze roving with a kind of proprietary approval over the fair landscape, when the very thin young man came suddenly round the corner. He was a very thin young man indeed, with a densely-freckled visage and very bright blue eyes; he was arrayed in elderly grey flannels and carried a thick stick. At sight of Mr. Peevey he halted and bowed gravely.

"Good evening," said he.

"Evenin'," returned Mr. Peevey graciously.

"I want," said the very thin young man, "three things—a pint of beer, a rump-steak well done, and a bed. How about it?"

Across the vast countenance of Mr.

Peevey spread a wide, glad smile; his three chins quivered with delight.

"Cert'nly, sir. Will you be stoppin' long?"

The young man flung out an arm in a magnificent gesture. "Who knows? To-day we're here, to-morrow gone. We eat and sleep and stagger on."

Mr. Peevey's massive jaw dropped slightly, adding another chin to the series. The young man leaned forward and prodded him sharply in his prominent waistcoat.

"You may as well know it," he said. "They call me a poet. I write a lot of verse—and sell it, which is worse. It means that I may never claim a place upon the scroll of fame."

Mr. Peevey's jaw dropped still further; he backed a step and cast a nervous glance

at the open door behind him. The self-confessed poet threw back his head and roared with laughter.

"Brace up, man!" he said gaily. "I ought to have warned you that I get these attacks at times. You'll get used to it. What of that beer?"

That reminded of his hasty duties, Mr. Peevey, with a palpable effort, achieved his normal calm. He turned about and led the way into the dim, low-raftered taproom, the young man at his heels.

"I never drink alone," said the poet, "so double it."

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Peevey, somewhat reassured by this evidence of his guest's sanity. There ensued a brief ceremony with tankards.

"Last year," said the poet, emerging with a happy sigh from the depths, "a fellow called Fish was landlord here when I passed this way."

"That's right. Married money, 'e did, an' quit. Said it was too quiet 'ere for 'im."

"You don't find it so?"

"Not me," said Mr. Peevey. "I like it quiet, see? Mind you, I don't turn no custom away, but after the parts I've lived in, it comes very agreeable to settle down in a place where a dog-fight's a riot. You're the first customer I've 'ad for two days."

"Good," said the poet. "Then I stay."

Mr. Peevey reached for the decrepit exercise-book which served him as a species of register, opened it and spun it round. The poet took up the pen and hesitated.

"I hardly like to," he murmured. "What right has a poet to a name like mine? I've often thought of changing it to Marjoribanks, but we've had it in the family so long that I can't be so brutal." He sighed, and wrote in a large, dashing hand: "John Briggs."

"What about luggage, sir?" said Mr. Peevey.

Mr. Briggs slapped a pocket. "Pyjamas," he said. He slapped another. "Other half of pyjamas." He slapped a third. "Tooth brush, razor, and pocket Milton. I travel light."

"Well, I expect you'd fancy a bit of a wash while I do your steak. There's only me an' a boy about the place."

"Bachelor?" asked the poet.

"You bet," replied Mr. Peevey austerely. "I know when I'm well off."

"How few of us can say the same!" observed the poet. "Well, lead me to the pump and the bar of Sunlight."

By evening of the following day Mr. Peevey was prepared to admit that "The George" had never harboured a less exacting or a more eccentric guest. Incomprehensible as was most of the poet's conversation, he proved otherwise a model lodger. He slumbered peacefully until awakened, ate gladly whatever his host saw fit to set before him, insisted on cleaning his own boots, and made no complaints. Not that there was anything to complain about, for Mr. Joshua Peevey was a flawless example of that modern rarity, the man who knows his job. Despite his lack of custom, Mr. Peevey clung firmly to his theories of a publican's duties, and spared no pains in carrying them out. He gave to Mr. Briggs a care and attention that would have gratified a ruling monarch, and the poet showed himself by no means unappreciative.

"Host," he said to Mr. Peevey on the second evening, "you are a perfect mother to me, though I've never met the mother who could cook bacon as you can. No matter where or how you look, how rare to find the perfect cook!"

Mr. Peevey coughed modestly. They were seated upon the weather-battered settle that stood before the inn. The still twilight of a summer evening was all about them; queer little insect noises came to them from the field across the road; the smoke of their pipes rose languidly into the quiet air. A well-fed peace hung over the scene.

"Tain't often as I get a chance to show what I can do, sir," said Mr. Peevey. "Folk hereabouts don't seem to 'ave no idea o' good cookin', if you know what I mean. It's only when I get a gent like yourself or——"

"Hush!" said the poet gently. "One approaches. Friend Peevey, pray that it may be another who knows real food when he sees it."

"What 'opes!" said Mr. Peevey.

The footsteps drew nearer, and presently there came into view from the twilight of the lane a feminine figure. In the light from the inn door this person stood revealed as a tall, slender girl of startling comeliness, attired in what are technically known as "sensible tweeds," and carrying a small handbag. The poet drew a quick breath and rose to his feet. Mr. Peevey, with considerably more difficulty, followed his example. The girl looked serenely from one to the other.

"Can I have a room here, please?" she said.

"Cert'nly, miss," said Mr. Peevey briskly. No one would have suspected from his manner that two guests in one day constituted an event unprecedented in the annals of "The George." "Step inside."

The girl followed him indoors without a backward glance at the poet, who stood gazing after her for a space with a faint smile upon his freckled features. Presently he expelled a happy sigh.

"Wonderful!" he said, and in his turn entered the inn.

Mr. Peevey, descending heavily from the bestowal of his second visitor in the upper regions, discovered the man Briggs poring over the ink-stained register in the taproom. At Mr. Peevey's entrance he turned and exhibited a dreamy smile.

"Fay Heritage!" said the poet ecstatically. "What could be better? Friend Peevey, old William S. had the wrong end of the stick. A rose might smell as sweet by any other name, mayhap, but a girl who's christened Emma has a fearful handicap."

Mr. Peevey gently shook a waggish head. "I thought," he said, with a kind of elephantine playfulness, "as 'ow you come 'ere for peace an' quiet, sir."

"I've changed my mind," said the poet simply. "These things are ordained."

Mr. Peevey himself was almost converted to this view on the following morning when, bearing bacon in a lordly dish, he entered the little coffee-room to find Mr. Briggs and Miss Heritage conversing with all the affability of childhood acquaintances. At least, Mr. Briggs was doing the conversing, while Miss Heritage doubled the rôles of audience and occasional chorus.

"Ha," exclaimed the poet, "here is bacon! Miss Heritage, if you have ever eaten bacon like this before, it must have been in some other existence. There's none like it on this planet."

Mr. Peevey, glancing almost coyly at Miss Heritage, received a smile that rocked him in his boots.

"I'm sure of that," said Miss Heritage. "Please, Mr. Peevey, if it won't be too much trouble, would you make me a few sandwiches for lunch? I want to do a little sketching."

"Repeat the operation on my behalf, friend Peevey," added the poet, "for I must go out and compose a roundel or two."

"That's right," said Mr. Peevey, beaming. "Get all the fresh air you can."

When, some forty minutes later, the poet and his companion set forth from the inn, Mr. Peevey sped them from the doorway and stood looking after them with an expression of fatherly benevolence upon his almost circular face. Like all really good cooks, Mr. Peevey was at heart a sentimentalist, and, like all sentimentalist, rejoiced at an opportunity of displaying his matchmaking abilities. Though himself a confirmed celibate, he had no objection to guiding the steps of others towards the altar, and the charm of the present situation appealed to him strongly. He liked the poet, and the beauty of Miss Heritage struck him dumb; what could be more suitable? As they disappeared round the corner, Mr. Peevey turned back into the house with a snatch of song upon his lips. Romance had come to "The George."

It was late before the objects of his interest returned. Mr. Peevey, observing them from afar, noted that they came slowly, absorbed in earnest converse. One would never have supposed, reflected Mr. Peevey, that they had met for the first time barely twenty-four hours ago. He smiled benignly as he turned away to make ready the evening meal.

It was after supper that, wandering forth to take a pipe beneath the stars, Mr. Peevey came upon the poet alone. Mr. Briggs was seated upon the old settle by the inn door, writing furiously by such light as was available. At Mr. Peevey's approach he looked up and nodded.

"Well," said Mr. Peevey, "you 'ad a fine day for it."

"A miraculous girl," said the poet, scribbling industriously.

Mr. Peevey agreed. "Writin' a pome?" he inquired.

"A sonnet to her eyebrow," explained the poet.

"Is that so?" said Mr. Peevey doubtfully.

There followed a pause.

"Friend Peevey," said the poet suddenly, "where can I get a guitar?"

"A what?" said Mr. Peevey, startled.

"A guitar—a musical instrument of an amatory character."

"What d'you want that for?" said Mr. Peevey, forgetting his manners in his astonishment.

The poet eyed him reproachfully. "Friend Peevey," he said sadly, "there are times when you seem almost dull. If music soothes the savage breast, may I

not strum it with the best? Don't you realise, host, that the time is now ripe for the serenade?"

"Oh," said Mr. Peevey foggily, "is it?"

"It is. Where can I get a guitar? Or

Immediately after breakfast on the following morning he borrowed the decrepit bicycle whereon Mr. Peevey was wont to make occasional journeys, and pedalled briskly away into the blue. Miss Heritage, having



"Bearing bacon in a lordly dish, he entered the little coffee-room to find Mr. Briggs and Miss Heritage conversing with all the affability of childhood acquaintances."

a mandoline would do. I can't play either, so it doesn't matter."

"Last Feb'ry," said Mr. Peevey, "a gent stopped 'ere what played the flute. 'E used to get 'is moosic an' such over to Wenbury."

"Good," said the poet, rising. "Tomorrow I'll follow his example. Good night, friend Peevey. Kind angels guard thee in repose. To keep your health, breathe through the nose."

Mr. Briggs proved as good as his word.

seen him off, took her sketch-book out into the little garden. Along toward noon there came to her Mr. Peevey, bearing a vast glass of milk upon a tray.

"I thought as maybe you'd like this," he explained. "It keeps up your strength."

Miss Heritage thanked him warmly and revealed an inclination to chat awhile. "Is Mr. Briggs coming back to lunch?" she asked.

"I reckon so, miss," said Mr. Peevey. "'E's only gone to get a guitar."

Miss Heritage stared at him. "A guitar? Whatever for?"

"I dunno," said Mr. Peevey. "'E did tell me, but I didn't rightly catch it. 'E talks queer at times."

looked at Mr. Peevey. "You like him, don't you?"

"Bless you, yes, miss," said Mr. Peevey. "Nice young feller, Mr. Briggs is. Make any girl a good husband, I'll lay."



"At least, Mr. Briggs was doing the conversing, while Miss Heritage doubled the rôles of audience and occasional chorus."

"I see," said Miss Heritage, and fell silent. Slowly a smile grew about her mouth; suddenly she laughed.

"Oh, the idiotic child!" she said, and

"I quite agree with you," said Miss Heritage composedly.

This little conversation caused Mr. Peevey much inward satisfaction. Events seemed

to be marching tranquilly in the required direction. It would be an ideal match, reflected Mr. Peevey, from every point of view. The calm good sense of Miss Heritage would serve to balance the airy irresponsibility of the poet; the latter was the kind of man who, in Mr. Peevey's opinion, needed someone to look after him.

For the remainder of that day Mr. Peevey saw but little of his guests. The poet returned, dusty, travel-worn, and laden with a large parcel of peculiar shape, in time for lunch; thereafter he and Miss Heritage absented themselves until late in the evening. Mr. Peevey, studying them carefully on their return, told himself that all was proceeding according to plan. He went to bed in that mood of serene self-congratulation which comes to all successful matchmakers.

It must have been somewhere in the neighbourhood of midnight when Mr. Peevey was awakened by singular noises from without. He sat up in bed and lent an ear for a moment; then he clambered heavily out and gathered up a boot.

"Darn them cats!" muttered Mr. Peevey, approaching the window.

His first glance, however, showed him that he had erred in his diagnosis. No cat was visible, but in a patch of moonlight before the inn stood the long, lean figure of the poet. He was gazing upwards earnestly and with his hands extracting uncouth, wailing sounds from some unrecognisable instrument. Mr. Peevey drew back hastily, dropping the boot. As he clambered back into bed again, his expression was one of genial tolerance.

"These youngsters!" murmured Mr. Peevey, drawing the blanket about his ears. Nevertheless, in the morning he approached the poet as the latter was filling a pipe preparatory to setting forth upon the day's excursion.

"Slep' well, I 'ope, sir?" said Mr. Peevey.

"Never better," replied the poet.

"It's more'n I did," said Mr. Peevey, with that portentous solemnity which he invariably assumed when about to be humorous. "I'm as partial to a nice bit o' moosic as any man, I 'ope, but in the int'rests o' my 'ealth an' strength I mus' reelly ask you to stop playin' your banjo under my winder in the middle o' the night."

The poet started, drew back a step, and bent upon Mr. Peevey a glance of the most profound disgust. "Banjo!" he said haughtily. "My good clod, that wasn't

a banjo! I couldn't get a guitar or a mandoline, so I got a ukelele. If you object to melody, you must move your bed, friend Peevey."

"You oughter 'ave a few lessons," suggested his host. "It don't do to go at things too 'asty, sir."

"Now, that's odd," remarked the poet. "Less than a week ago my wife said exactly the same thing to me."

Mr. Peevey started as if stung by a powerful hornet; his mouth opened and so remained while he stared at the poet as at some weird museum exhibit. He gulped thrice in rapid succession and accomplished speech.

"Your wife?"

"My wife," confirmed the poet. "A charming woman. You'd like her, I think."

"But—where is she?"

"At the moment," said the poet, "I really couldn't say. Uncertain, coy, and hard to please, they're all as elusive as heart-disease."

About the feet of Mr. Peevey Romance was crumbling to ruin.

"But——" he began feebly.

The appearance of Miss Heritage at this juncture put an end to his questioning. Mr. Peevey, his mouth still slightly open and a glazed look in his eyes, watched the pair down the road until they turned the corner. Even then he remained as if one with the ground, staring after them.

One has sympathy for Mr. Peevey. What matchmaker, enveloped without warning in similar disaster, would not feel a certain sense of shock? Mr. Peevey's emotions may be compared to those of one who, having confidently expected great things of a wealthy uncle, learns suddenly that the old gentleman has left it all to an inebriates' home. And there was more than that. Mr. Peevey's heart was of pure gold, but he was a stickler for propriety. Things either were, or were not, done. If they were done, Mr. Peevey did them; if they were not, he shunned them as the plague. His instincts were all on the side of the conventions, and it seemed to him now, in the light of the poet's revelation, that the conventions were suffering a deplorable affront. Mr. Peevey sighed heavily and turned back into the house to think things over.

The result of this cogitation became apparent some twelve hours later, when Miss Heritage, seated pensive upon the old oak settle, glanced up, at the sound of a

footstep, to see her host bearing down upon her, his normally cheerful face overcast with gloom.

"Evenin', miss," said Mr. Peevey sadly.

"Good evening, Mr. Peevey," returned Miss Heritage brightly. "Isn't it a lovely night? Mr. Briggs has gone across the road to pick some flowers."

Mr. Peevey snorted. "Pity 'e don't pick some for 'is wife," he said sombrely and with deep meaning.

Miss Heritage glanced round and raised those eyebrows to which, not long ago, a sonnet had been composed. "His wife?"

"Yes," said Mr. Peevey, driving it home. "E's married."

"You talk as if being married were a sort of crime," said Miss Heritage, smiling.

"Sometimes," said Mr. Peevey, "it is."

"Good gracious!" said Miss Heritage. "I hope you don't regard *me* as a criminal!"

"You——" said Mr. Peevey, and stopped abruptly. For the second time that day his jaw dropped; his eyes protruded until they threatened to desert his head; he wagged his hands helplessly. "Meantersay," he almost croaked at her, "as *you're* married, too?"

"Oh, yes," said Miss Heritage. "Very much so."

"You don't wear no ring," faltered Mr. Peevey.

"Well, I'm having a holiday now," explained Miss Heritage. "Which reminds me that I must get my beauty sleep. Good night, Mr. Peevey."

But answer, as someone has so neatly put it, came there none. Mr. Peevey was incapable of coherent speech. He could only gaze blankly before him and emit faint, unintelligible sounds. Even the advent of the poet, radiating cheerfulness and carrying an armful of the flowers of the field, failed to rouse him from his trance.

"Doing your breathing exercises, friend Peevey?" said the poet. "Be careful of the night air. Good night. Oh, by the way, watch your step when you go upstairs. I'm going to lay this gallant posy at my lady's door, and I should hate to have it trodden on."

Mr. Peevey groaned.

"Indigestion?" asked the poet compassionately. "Try a brisk little walk. If thy inside doth cause thee rue, a gallop is the thing to do. I'd come with you, but I want to get up early and practise the ukelele." He passed, whistling blithely, into

the house, leaving behind him a disillusioned and scandalised publican blinking vaguely at the night.

* * * * *

At ten a.m. of the following morning Mr. John Briggs issued from the inn, sat down upon the settle, and took out his pipe. To him, as he sat placidly smoking and meditating variously upon life, there came presently Miss Fay Heritage, who took a seat beside him. For a space there was silence. Then:

"What ails friend Peevey this morning?" said the poet. "It's the first time I've known him live up to his name. He hath a sickish look."

"I know," said Miss Heritage. "When I asked him for the sandwiches just now, he looked as if he'd have liked to give me a hemlock bowl." She paused, and a little smile crept about the corners of her mouth. "John, we've scandalised him, poor soul. We must tell him at once."

"Yes," agreed the poet, "though he has a most pullable leg, and——"

"Still," said Miss Heritage, "the poor, dear man——"

She broke off as the poor, dear man himself, preceded by his waistcoat, debouched from the inn door and came slowly towards them. Mr. Peevey's brow was furrowed with thought; he wore the general aspect of one upon whose damask cheek care, like a worm in the bud, is enjoying a quick lunch. As he advanced, his lips moved soundlessly; it was if he were rehearsing some set speech.

"Hail, friend Peevey!" said the poet.

Mr. Peevey nodded moodily, came to a halt, settled himself firmly on his feet and stared earnestly at the couple before him. "I been thinking it over," said Mr. Peevey, "an' I reckon I'd oughter say a word or two, though it's a liberty. But, seein' as I'm old enough to be both your fathers, an' actin' as a sort o' *loco parentum*, I 'ope you'll excuse me." He thrust out a stubby forefinger at the poet. "You got a wife, eh?"

"Undoubtedly," replied the poet.

"And you," pursued Mr. Peevey, turning the forefinger upon Miss Heritage, "got a 'usband?"

"Certainly."

"Then," said Mr. Peevey, "you didn't ought to go on the way you are. 'Taint proper, see? Maybe neither of you didn't know the other'd got a 'usband an' a wife; well, you know now. 'Tain't proper, that's

what. All this 'ere banjo-playing, an' puttin' bunches o' flowers on the mat, an'—an' all that. I'm taking a liberty, I know, speakin' so free, but I took a fancy to you two. Best thing you can do is go away sep'rate, back to your 'usband an' wife, Stop this 'ere business while you *can* stop it." He paused, seeking further embellishments of his theme; finding none, he heaved a sigh of relief. "Well, that's off my chest," he added, "beggin' your pardon."

There followed a silence. Then the poet rose to his feet. Miss Heritage did likewise.

"Friend Peevey," said the poet, "meet my wife."

"Dear Mr. Peevey," said Miss Heritage, "meet my husband."

Mr. Peevey had sustained a number of severe shocks of late, but his capacity for surprise was not yet exhausted. He started in a manner highly creditable in one of his physique, and stared from one to the other with a childish bewilderment.

"Eh?" he said vaguely. "What's that? Meantersay you're——"

"Married," finished the poet.

"Irrevocably," said Miss Heritage.

"But—but 'ow?" quavered Mr. Peevey. "What about your 'usb—meantersay 'e's the 'usband you spoke of?"

"Quite," said Miss Heritage.

"But when was you married? Yes'-day?"

"Last year," said Miss Heritage.

"August the twenty-third," said the poet.

"Lend an ear, friend Peevey, while I relate the way of it. A year ago I turned up here, just as I turned up the other day, craving

solitude and peace. Next day this young lady arrived, just as she arrived the other day. After that I wanted no more solitude. We were married in a month. Now, friend Peevey, that marriage was so successful that we decided, by way of an experiment, to repeat word for word and act for act the circumstances of our first meeting—to live those three days over again, in fact. It sounds an impossible thing to do, but we've done it. The only difference is that last year I had a piccolo."

"You see, dear Mr. Peevey," said Mrs. Briggs softly, "we're rather idiotic people."

"But we found," said the poet, "that we're much happier married than we were even in those days, so we decided to drop the experiment and be normal. That's why I told you I had a wife, to break it to you gently. I couldn't resist pulling your leg, friend Peevey."

"Crumbs!" said Mr. Peevey dizzily. "So you done all this last year?"

"Even so," said the poet. "Serenade and all. Can you blame us, friend Peevey, for trying to capture a little of yesterday's fine, careless rapture?"

For a moment Mr. Peevey said no word. Then suddenly he nodded his head three times with great vehemence. "Wait 'ere," he ordered, and almost cantered into the house. In a moment he reappeared, bearing upon a tray three glasses of sherry. He handed a glass to Mrs. Briggs, another to the poet, and himself retained the third. He beamed affectionately upon the pair.

"Well," said Mr. Peevey, "many 'appy returns!"





"The trickle became a deluge, leaping into space with a flurry of spindrift and sending the gannets shrieking from their drowned-out nests."

THE MANGROVE MAN

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

MANGROVES are—well, mangroves. They are like mosquitoes and sundry other adjuncts to life in the tropics—no sound excuse has yet been found for their existence. Perhaps some day a really clever scientist will discover that they contain the cure for a cold in the head, or something. In the meantime they remain what they are, a gnarled and twisted horror of roots, sprouting from black slime, and harbouring every loathsome thing that crawls, swims, or flies.

That is why Strode came to possess half an island of them. No one else would have been seen dead with the things. He was considered mad on their account, but he was not. He was only Strode—Strode who

had landed in the Islands with nothing more than the physique and mind of a mule.

He soon found that working for others on a copra place led to nothing but the nearest bar, and that his qualities were wasted in a country where the white man is forbidden by an unwritten but none the less stringent law so much as to lift a finger in manual toil. He came very near working his passage to Australia, where he would most certainly have found a vent for his superfluous energies amongst the tall timber of the backblocks, but at that particular juncture chanced to meet Bowman.

The name should be enough. If it is not, then you have never been near the Islands.

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It stands for most of the money and property in the Tau Group, for a chain of stores covering several hundred miles of beach and jungle, and for a fat little man with the face of a cherub and the soul of a fox.

He was taking his customary cup of afternoon tea in the lounge of "The Polynesian," when Strode, who was waiting for the Sydney boat, drifted in.

"Just arrived?" suggested Bowman. He believed in getting to know everyone. You can never tell how much use a fellow-creature may be.

"No," said Strode in his slow, deep bass. "Just leaving—if I get the chance."

"Like that, is it?" Bowman leant back in "The Polynesian's" only comfortable chair, stirred his tea, and prepared to listen to the average hard luck yarn.

But it was not forthcoming. Strode picked up a week-old paper and began to read, which nettled Bowman. He was not used to being regarded as of secondary importance to anything.

"Sorry we don't suit," he remarked, with the smile that always served to cloak his sarcasms.

Strode looked up with a slightly puzzled expression. "Oh, it's not that," he said. "The Islands suit me all right, but I don't seem to suit them."

"Drink?" queried Bowman, his smile broadening to cover the blatancy of the question.

Strode shook his head. "No," he said, "that doesn't worry me."

"Mat fever?" (Indolence.)

"No, I don't think I've ever been accused of that."

"Then what the mischief's the matter with the Islands?"

"They don't let a man work," said Strode.

Bowman was surprised into letting his tea get cold.

"Well," he said, after a reflective pause, "I've heard a few complaints in my time, but that's a new one. They've let *me* work all right."

"Yes," said Strode, "with your head." He leant upon the bar, his mahogany-coloured face clouded after the fashion of a man who finds some difficulty in expressing himself. "But that's not in my line, Mr. Bowman."

"You know who I am, then?"

"Oh, yes, I know who you are. I worked on your Malita estate."

"And they didn't let you work hard enough?"

"No."

Bowman blew out his pink cheeks and allowed them to slowly collapse.

"Well, that ought easily to be remedied," he said.

"It ought," Strode agreed, "but it isn't. I started humping copra sacks for exercise, but they stopped me. Said it wasn't done. Then, when I saw it taking ten coolies half the day to pole a punt down the coast, I sent them copra getting and did it myself. But your manager didn't like that either."

"He wouldn't," said Bowman. "Neither would I. You haven't got this thing right. How are we to keep up the prestige of the white man if he takes to doing things like that?"

"That's just what they told me," muttered Strode a trifle wearily, "so I suppose they're right, though I didn't notice any loss of prestige. For that matter, the coolies seemed to work better for me than anyone else."

There was no hint of bravado in the utterance. It was a plain statement of fact, and Bowman recognised it as such. His nimble mind was already at work on Strode, dissecting him, reassembling him, seeing just how such a quaint individual could be made to fit into the scheme of things Bowmanian.

"Seems to me you're wasted here," he observed at last.

"Yes, that's why I'm leaving," said Strode.

"And yet"—Bowman appeared to be thinking deeply, but he was not. He had made up his mind about Strode: the fellow needed a lesson, then he might be of use—"and yet, if you *want* to do the work of ten coolies, I don't see why you shouldn't—on someone else's place."

Strode shook his head. "They don't pay my wages here," he said.

"Oh!" Bowman leant back and appeared to be pondering this new problem.

"And what may *they* be?"

Without the flicker of an eyelash Strode mentioned a sum about three times in excess of what Bowman paid his managers.

"No," mused the little man, "I shouldn't think they would. What can you do, by the way?"

"Pretty near anything with my hands," said Strode.

"You price yourself a bit high, don't you?"

"I don't think so. I've got something to sell, just the same as you or any man, and that's my price."

"Well, I'm not buying," snapped Bowman.

"I didn't ask you to," said Strode.

A minah bird strutted in from the verandah and pecked about the floor for stray crumbs. Bowman watched it for a moment, then burst into one of his well-known laughs. The deals that laugh had sealed should be incorporated in any history of the Islands.

"Come to think of it, you didn't," he admitted. "I'm so used to wasters crawling to me for jobs——"

"Oh, that's all right," said Strode, and turned towards the door.

Bowman watched him go—as far as the verandah—then called him back.

"You're not above a bit of advice?" he suggested.

"No."

"Well, if you can earn that with your hands, don't work for other people."

"I wouldn't if I could help it, but how's a man to get hold of a place of his own in this country?"

"Earn it," said Bowman.

"What—by saving enough out of your wages to buy?"

"No. Get paid in land."

Strode looked down at his enormous feet, then into the cherubic face before him.

"And where do I meet anyone who'll do that?" he asked.

"Here," said Bowman, levering himself out of the chair and shaking his ducks into shape. "I'm going on an inspection trip to Lanua to-morrow. Meet me at the landing six o'clock sharp, if you feel like going any further in the matter."

"All right," said Strode, "I will."

He kept the appointment, and to the tick of the stated hour Bowman's launch, a sleek thing of polished brass and glittering enamel, shot out from the landing. It was said that he was the only man in the Islands who could keep a Kanaka to time.

On arrival at Lanua, Bowman, who believed in surprise visits, proceeded to make his manager's life rather less attractive than it was under ordinary circumstances, and those were nothing to write home about. But towards evening he seemed to remember Strode's existence, and took him along the beach road to where the palm groves ended and the land fell away into a swamp, mercifully hidden under its dark green roof of mangroves.

"There's your land," he said vigorously

flicking his fly whisk in an effort to dispel the clouds of mosquitoes that hovered about their heads. "If you can make anything of that, you can have it."

Anyone else would have looked on the offer as a joke, or told Bowman what he thought of him. But Strode did neither. He stood in silence for some time, looking out over that noisome stretch of country as though he were giving it serious consideration. And he was.

"How much of it?" he asked.

"As much as you can clear and plant to anything that'll grow," said Bowman. "I don't mind telling you it's no good to me. Whew! These things are eating me alive!"

"If I give you an answer by to-morrow evening, will that be time enough?" Strode asked.

"Plenty," said Bowman. "Let's get out of here."

The next day Strode failed to put in an appearance, but about ten o'clock that night, while Bowman and his manager were smoking on the verandah, a weird object emerged from the groves into the full moonlight of the compound and appeared to indulge in some new form of callisthenics. It was Strode, scraping the mud from himself—or, rather, trying to, for when he mounted the verandah steps there was still little of him visible.

A house-boy brought him tinned stuff, which he consumed in large quantities, squatting on the steps.

"Well," said Bowman, drawing amusedly at his cigar, "do you like our land any better than our wages?"

Strode did not answer the question. Instead, he swallowed a prodigious mouthful, washed it down with tea, and said: "I close with your offer, Mr. Bowman, and thank you."

The idea of any man thanking him for a mangrove flat tickled Bowman, but he did not laugh.

"What are you giving us?" his manager asked him the next morning, when it became evident that Strode intended to stay on Lanua.

"I'm giving you a young man who says we don't let him work hard enough," said Bowman, settling back amongst the launch cushions.

"But what am I to do with him?" wailed the manager.

"Nothing," said Bowman. "Leave him alone until he's broken his heart, then report to me."

The launch sheered away from the landing, and the manager wended a mystified way to the store.

There he found Strode discussing hardware and sundries with the Kanaka assistant.

"I'll choose what I want, and you can make a note of it," he said, and proceeded to build on the counter a neat pyramid of three sheets of corrugated iron, his personal belongings in a grain sack, a supply of dynamite sticks, axe heads and handles, a couple of shovels, a pickaxe, a crowbar, and a promiscuous assortment of groceries.

"I had no instructions to let you have anything out of the store," said the manager. He was a lean, liverish sort of person with an unholy dread of Bowman.

Strode looked at him. "This stuff's for sale, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes, but only for cash—to strangers."

"Well, then——" said Strode, and produced some money.

He did not say that the payment of that bill left him with precisely nothing. He merely hoisted the entire purchase on to his head, with a copra sack as a buffer, and stalked down the beach road like a perambulating cistern.

It took him the greater part of the day to reach his objective, but reach it he did, sweating and weary as he had never yet been in the Islands. That night the corrugated iron became a roof of sorts—the only sort to resist a tropical downpour—and Strode squatted before his own home door, munching bully beef and wild plantain by the light of the moon.

To follow his movements from then onward would mean watching him rise with the dawn, exerting the last ounce of his immense strength and endurance throughout a wilting and mosquito-infested day, and retiring to rest as darkness fell after a brief interview with a photograph of a fluffy girl who lived in a town four thousand miles distant. A monotonous business. It were better, perhaps, to pry into his correspondence, which consisted of an apparently endless letter, written in instalments, with a stub of indelible pencil on soiled scraps of paper.

"DEAREST," he wrote,

"I'm on the track at last. A man here has given me a mangrove swamp, if I can do anything with it, and I'm going to. You know I learnt something about irrigation in the West. Well, put it all backwards, and you've got what I'm trying to do here. Instead of bringing water on to land, I have

got to get rid of it, and when that's done, some of the best land on this island will be *ours*! Anyway, I've got work in front of me that I can do, and do all the quicker because I know it's for you, and" (The asterisks indicate passages that have no bearing on the matter in hand.) "The swamp is made by a river that comes down from the hills and spreads out all over the flat. Well, I'm going to make that river go somewhere else. It's so simple after the the job in Rip's Gap that I laughed when I saw it. At one place on the hillside it flows within a hundred yards of a cliff falling sheer to the sea. Dig a ditch through that bit of cliff, and the river becomes a waterfall. Do you get the idea? It'll take time, because I have no money to hire help; but I'm strong and well, and I've got you. . . . I can see just where our home is going to be. There's a bit of a hill down on the flat, with a drahra tree on it in full bloom, a blaze of scarlet. And I can just see you. . . ."

He posted the letter at Bowman's store, and thereafter—for a solid six months, if you can imagine it—that tropic hillside rang to the labours of man, a hole in the ground became imperceptibly larger, and somewhere at the bottom of it Strode sweated and sang.

He was thinner—that was the only noticeable difference about him at the end of that time—and his eyes were a trifle too bright to be natural, but then he had worked clean through two attacks of fever, and another was close upon him. Also he had taken to audible communion with the photograph of the fluffy girl, which was a bad sign.

"If only I didn't have to eat and sleep," he wrote, "what a saving of time! As it is, I have to hunt my grub now; but there's plenty of it—fish, bush-pig, pigeon and plantains, and—I'm only fifteen yards from the edge! What do you think of that? Peg's Fall I shall call it. If only you could be here to see. . . ."

But "Peg" was not, so that when the great moment came, it was only her photograph, upheld in Strode's hand, that looked with stony eyes on a gaunt, work-soiled man watching with fevered intensity a trickle of water that crept down the cutting towards the cliff's edge. Perhaps it heard him laugh aloud as the trickle became a deluge, leaping into space with a flurry of spindrift, and sending the gannets shrieking from their drowned-out nests.

"It's done," he wrote that night. "I can hear Peg's Fall at this blessed moment, and next to your voice it's the finest music I ever listened to. . . . I believe the darned river wanted to go that way all the time. Most of them seem in a mighty hurry to reach the sea, and I've shown this one a short cut, that's all. It's me for a bit of a rest now, before I tackle the clearing. . . ."

The next day he walked into Bowman's store, posted the letter, and quietly crumpled on to the floor.

He came to under the manager's mosquito bar, and swung on to the edge of the bed with a suddenness that nearly jerked it from its rusty legs.

"What's happened?" he demanded.

The manager, who was indulging in a sun-downer on the verandah, lounged into the doorway.

"You fainted," he said.

"Me? Faint?" Strode tried to laugh, but the pain in his head spoilt the effect.

"Yes, *you*," said the manager. "You don't claim to be different from anyone else, do you?"

"No, but——"

"Well, then——" said the manager.

"But why did I faint?"

"Ever heard of fever?"

"Yes."

"Well, you've got it."

"Oh," said Strode, and lay back with chattering teeth.

"This is m-m-mighty g-good of you," he jerked out.

The manager did not answer. It was hardly necessary to point out that in the Islands the devil himself would do no less for a man in Strode's position. He threw a couple more blankets on the quaking body, administered quinine, and returned to his sundowner.

Strode's "rest" lasted three days, and consisted for the most part of lying on the flat of his back, alternately making a noise like castanets and blithering about someone named "Peg's Fall." But the manager was used to it. He was used to most things. Then the patient arose, and made himself the kind of nuisance that only seems possible to a strong man who doesn't know when he's weak.

Perhaps it was a parcel he had just received that precipitated matters. It was registered, and contained a ten-paged letter that appeared to give entire satisfaction, a sum of money about sufficient to buy a bag of lozenges, with the strict injunction

that it was to be used for "hiring help," and a hand-knitted woollen muffler.

It is to be feared that Strode lacked a sense of humour. In any case, his smile was not one of amusement, even at the muffler. He anathematised himself as a malingerer for not being at work for the sender of such a parcel, and took a grateful leave of the manager.

"Don't talk about it," grunted that worthy. "I may breeze in on you that way some time. I don't know who you are, or what you're doing, but I can tell you this: you're doing it too hard."

Strode grinned and shook his head.

"All right," said the manager, "you know best. S'long."

From behind the store counter he watched his late patient plunge into the glare of the compound and diminish, with a slightly wavering gait, down the beach road.

"Some blamed woman!" he muttered, and slouched back to the verandah and a sundowner.

As for Strode, the work that had gone before was child's play compared with what followed. The mangroves received him with open arms, and writhed with mirth at his puny efforts to destroy them. They found it amusing, no doubt, to watch him plastering himself with slime in an effort to admit amongst them the purging sunlight that they loathed. Or so it seemed to Strode. And that was how he came in time to regard them as something alive, as implacable enemies against whom he had waged war. At night, in the lean-to now situated in their midst, he could hear them laughing contemptuously or murmuring amongst themselves.

For a mangrove swamp is articulate. It crackles with the scuttlings of a myriad crabs. Its mud will subside with a long-drawn sigh, or suck and slobber like a gross eater. And of a night Strode would listen and laugh, for he knew that his enemy was in travail. It was crying out for water that would never again nourish its pestilential carcase. What was more, he had cleared nearly an acre. Often he would stand and watch the yellow sunlight streaming down on solidifying land that for unknown centuries had lain in rotting gloom, and at such times felt like a conqueror releasing prisoners from bondage.

"An acre of Lanua is *ours*," he wrote amongst other puerilities. "It's nothing much to look at just now, because the mangroves I've felled are lying all over it, but

the sun and Peg's Fall have turned the trick between them. I'll be burning off in a month or less, then I'll plant banana suckers wherever possible to carry on with, and leave the stumping till later. I don't mind how long that takes, because you'll be here. Oh, yes, you will! The bank will make an advance all right when they see what I've got. Such land! I don't know how long that river had been running down here—a few hundred years, I expect—but it carried all the best soil of the valley with it, and I should say our land is going to be black loam about half a mile deep . . .”

It would be interesting to know just how these illuminating epistles were received in the twelve-by-fourteen room of the suburban villa where they came to rest, but that is beside the point. What approaches it more closely is to note the effect of Strode's handiwork on the South

Pacific Sugar Refining Company's surveyor when he breasted the hills that divide Lanua in two and gazed on the flat below.

He had been with the Company something like fifteen years searching for possible expansions, and thought he knew the Group as well as any man, but somehow he didn't seem to recognise that flat. Wasn't there a river flowing on to it at one time? And what in thunder was a bald patch doing in the middle of the mangroves?

He was very thorough. The report and sketch plans he handed in to headquarters caused a mild sensation, and later a dignified gentleman to call at Bowman's office.

“I've come about some land of yours, Mr. Bowman.”

The little man was entirely mystified, but contrived not to show it.

“Ah, yes, land,” he repeated non-committally.



“‘It seems to me,’ he said, with an air of resignation, ‘I shall have to give you what you want, Mr. Strode.’”

"No purpose can be served by beating about the bush," the other continued,

that the mosquitoes had been so infernal during—during an interview with some maniac who claimed that he was not allowed to work hard enough. . . It all came back. Fancy forgetting that! But it happened a year—no, nearer two years ago, and he had heard nothing in the interval, which meant—which surely meant—

"We see you intend to do something with the land yourself"—the visitor's measured utterance penetrated his reflections—"and I must congratulate you on a really brilliant idea in the matter of the river."

Bowman had the presence of mind to incline his head and summon a deprecating smile.

"But as the soil is obviously unsuitable for copra, and it would be a sin to waste such land on any more than the ten acres you have already cleared and planted to bananas, we concluded you were improving the property with a view to sale. In which case"—the dignified gentleman paused and wiped his glasses

—"you may regard us as interested, Mr. Bowman."

The voice ceased, and Bowman removed his fixed gaze from a discoloured patch on the opposite wall.

"If I let you have my terms in three days' time, will that be satisfactory?" he suggested.

"Perfectly," agreed the other, unbending sufficiently to shake hands in farewell with a man he would not have spoken to under ordinary circumstances. "First offer is all we want, Mr. Bowman. Good day."

When he had gone, Bowman stood stock still in the middle of the room for a full half-



"'It rather looks like it,' agreed the basilisk in the doorway."

laying an immaculate solar topee on the desk. "I refer to the flat adjoining your Lanua property to the westward."

Bowman was still at a loss, but he smiled genially while racking his brains to imagine why the most powerful sugar concern south of the Line should interest itself in a mangrove swamp. It *was* a mangrove swamp, wasn't it? Why, yes, it was there

minute. First offer—from the South Pacific Sugar Refining Company Incorporated—for a mangrove swamp! Then he came to life.

The launch shot down to Lanua under a star-pricked sky. The manager was very naturally and very wearily in bed, but it made no difference to Bowman. Yanking the mosquito bar aside, he shook his victim unmercifully.

"Why didn't you report?" he barked.

"Report?" echoed the dazed manager, more than half convinced that he had died during the night, and this was hell. "Report what?"

"Report what?" mimicked Bowman venomously. "Where's that fellow who came here about eighteen months ago because he couldn't get enough work anywhere else?"

"Oh, you mean Strode."

"Yes, that's who I mean. Where is he? What's he been doing? Why haven't you sent in a report?"

The manager climbed out on the opposite side of the bed and lit the lamp with a trembling hand. Then he faced Bowman and tried to pull himself together. It was a pathetic sight.

"My instructions were to leave him alone until he'd broken his heart," he answered.

"That's so."

"Well, he hasn't."

Bowman turned from him with a gesture of impatient disgust.

"You're fired," he said.

"Thank Heaven!" said the manager, and climbed into bed again.

It was over. His awe of Bowman had fallen from him like a leaden weight.

Bowman occupied the time until dawn pacing the verandah and muttering to himself. It may seem peculiar that a man of his wealth and standing should make such an exhibition of himself over a mere proposal to buy land, but it must be borne in mind that the proposal was from the South Pacific Sugar Refining Company, which might mean anything, and that he was as avaricious as only a wealthy man can be. Moreover, his behaviour was not an "exhibition" in the accepted meaning of the term, but just Bowman, naked and unashamed.

At daylight he ordered a couple of ponies to be saddled, and set out with his long-suffering and dismissed manager, who accompanied him out of curiosity more than anything else.

A few hours' ride showed him as much

and more than he needed to see, and in the afternoon he approached the alleged "bald spot" in the mangroves.

It could hardly be called "bald" at the moment. Six-months-old banana plants make a brave show, and on a slight eminence in the midst of them there was a drahla tree in full bloom, with a very fair imitation of a native house nestling in its shade.

Bowman dismounted at the edge of the clearing for fear of the ground, which was still treacherous in places, and approached the "house" with mixed feelings. Not that he anticipated any difficulty in the long run, but the opening phases of the interview might be delicate. He summoned his smile and heartiest handshake for the man whose very existence he had forgotten, and who met him in the doorway as though they had parted but yesterday.

"Thought I'd look you up," beamed Bowman.

"Glad to see you," said Strode.

"After a year, or is it two?"

"Nearer two, I fancy."

Bowman accepted an invitation to be seated on one of his own copra sacks stretched across a framework of mangrove sticks, and proffered cigars.

"Thanks, I don't smoke," said Strode.

"Well, did you find enough work?"

Bowman shot at him genially over a lighted match.

Strode grinned reminiscently. "Plenty," he said. "And now I've only just begun."

"Ah!" Bowman appeared to digest the remark. "I wonder when you'll have had enough?"

"When this flat's cleared."

"I see, when the flat's cleared. And you find the wages good enough, eh?"

Strode sat on the edge of his home-made bed, and looked through the open doorway at the quivering green sea of banana leaves.

"Yes," he said, "the wages suit me all right."

"Because, if they don't, I thought of raising them," said Bowman.

Strode turned slowly and looked at him. "I don't see how you could do that," he said. "I'm much obliged for the chance you gave me. As a matter of fact, I was coming to see you soon. I shall want the deeds, or a written agreement of some sort before touching the bank for working capital."

"That's soon settled," chirped Bowman, and produced a cheque book. "Let's see." He continued to talk for much the same

reason that a conjurer employs patter. "I forget just what the arrangement was. Pretty stiff, I know that, but it's worth it. You've done well here. Name the wages, and they're yours—with a bonus. I——"

He said a great deal more. He found it unwontedly difficult to stop with those wide, child-like eyes fastened upon him. Strode waited until the end, until, that was, Bowman petered out like a punctured balloon, then said: "My wages were the land, Mr. Bowman."

"Land?"

"Yes. If you remember, I was to have all that I cleared of mangroves and planted to any crop that would grow. Those were the terms of our agreement."

Bowman stared at the ridge pole overhead, his usually seamless brow creased with wrinkles in an apparently herculean effort of memory.

"I don't seem to recollect *that*," he confessed at last.

"I do," said Strode.

"You mentioned an agreement," suggested Bowman, with the air of one solving a knotty problem. "Where is it?"

"It was verbal."

"Ah, yes, verbal," Bowman nodded his head sagely.

Even then, if you can believe it, Strode failed to recognise that this man was play-acting. It must be remembered that he had lived a great deal alone, and that he came from a country where a man's word is accepted as his bond. Two years *was* a long time. Bowman would remember presently. He must be made to remember. With the same painstaking attention to detail that characterised his every effort, Strode launched into an account of events leading up to the final agreement on the verandah of the manager's bungalow.

It was amusing, but Bowman did not smile. With his small eyes half closed, he appeared to be still engaged in a struggle of recollection, punctuated at intervals with a gentle shake of the head.

Perhaps he overdid it. Perhaps by some instinct vouchsafed to fools in dealing with knaves, Strode was visited by a sudden and complete understanding of the situation. In any case, a glint came into his eyes as he looked on Bowman and said quietly: "You liar!"

Bowman did not answer at the moment, but slowly changed colour, then picked up his cheque book and returned it to his pocket.

"In that case——" he began, and made to rise.

"Sit down," said Strode, and for some reason Bowman obeyed.

"I think," he said, after a ghastly pause, "this job must have sent you off your head."

"P'r'aps it has," said Strode.

"So that you imagine things," ventured Bowman. He was aware that his legs trembled, and crossed them to stop it. "Here am I offering more than we agreed on in the way of payment for a couple of years' work, and——"

"My payment was the land," said Strode.

It was like charging a brick wall, yet Bowman continued the process. What else was there to be done? For the first time in his life he found his cunning, whether employed in persuasion or threat, of no more avail than thin air.

How long he sat on that copra sack, with Strode answering in monosyllables or not answering at all, Bowman had no notion, but the brief dusk was settling down on Lanua when he decided on the next course.

"How long do you figure on keeping me here?" he asked suddenly.

"Until you remember," said Strode. And the worst of it was, this mule-like individual meant it.

"It'll be a mighty long time before I remember what never happened," said Bowman. "No, I don't fancy waiting that long. Thompson!" He yelled his manager's name at the top of his voice.

It was the most absurd sound, coming out of the silence—something like the bleat of a distressed goat, and it was repeated with variations such as "Help!" But it had the desired effect. Thompson awoke from the semi-stupor in which he contrived to keep himself, and almost hurried in the direction of the noise.

Strode made no objection to his entry, but when it was effected, lit the hurricane lamp, took his rifle from the wall, and moved over to the doorway.

"This is a hold-up," spluttered Bowman. "The fellow's crazy."

Thompson looked from one to the other with an expression of mild inquiry.

"Hold-up? Who's doing the holding?"

"I am," said Strode.

"Can't you see?" wailed Bowman. "He's got a rifle; we haven't. He's keeping me here."

"What for?"

Bowman was very nearly speechless, but not quite.

"That's my business," he said. "Yours is to get me out of here."

Thompson took a seat. "I don't see that," he said. "I was fired this morning."

"You made a mistake," prompted Bowman.

"No." Thompson shook his weary head. "If I wasn't fired, I quit. Besides, I don't see how either of us is going to get out of here without being shot. I don't want to be shot."

"He wouldn't dare."

"Safety first," murmured Thompson; "and if it's so, why don't you get yourself out?"

It is a difficult matter to discuss means of escape in the presence of one's gaoler. Bowman found it so.

"Then you're going to stay as long as he chooses," he railed.

"I've seen many worse cribs," said Thompson, looking appreciatively about him.

"You're in league with him," stormed Bowman. "Blackmail, that's what it is. But I'll see about it-----" And there he stopped. He was sorry he had said as much, for it had suddenly occurred to him what to do, what he should have done long since. There is only one way of handling a mule.

Darkness had closed down. Out of the night beyond the clearing came the weird noises of the swamp, while in the yellow lamp-light loomed the figure of its guardian, silent, motionless. To Bowman there was something uncanny in the situation. It must be brought to an end.

"It seems to me," he said, with an air of resignation, "I shall have to give you what you want, Mr. Strode."

"It rather looks like it," agreed the basilisk in the doorway. It was almost a relief to hear it speak.

"What will satisfy you?"

"A written agreement in the terms of our verbal one, and witnessed by Mr. Thompson," said Strode. "You'll find stamps and paper on the table."

Bowman wrote in silence for a space. Thompson added a laboured signature, and Strode read it through with meticulous precision.

"Is this Mr. Bowman's usual signature?" he added.

Thompson nodded.

"Signed, sealed, and delivered," murmured Bowman, with his cherubic smile. "You're sure there's nothing else I can do?"

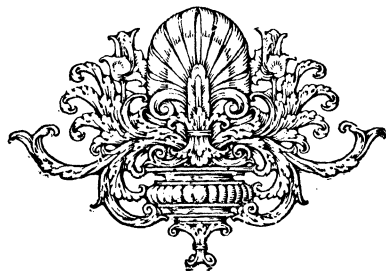
"Quite," said Strode.

But there he was wrong. There was just one thing to be done to make that agreement binding, and by some extraordinary twist of Fate Bowman did it.

He carried his smile into the inky darkness outside, for the document he had left behind him was not worth much more than the paper it was written on. Not so long as Bowman remained to contest it. "Agreements signed under compulsion" was the phrase that echoed in his mind, and he could soon prove *that*. There was Thompson as witness. . . . There were ways. . . . Already he was pondering on those ways, pondering so deeply that he missed his own.

That is the only reasonable explanation of the trend of his footprints as followed by Strode and Thompson the next day. For a considerable distance they followed the narrow track leading from the clearing to the hillside where his horse was tethered. Then, just where the encroaching branches chanced to meet across the path, they bore to the left, turned and twisted through an illimitable maze of roots, grew fainter as the ground softened, and finally faded from sight.

Which bears out the original contention that mangroves are—well, mangroves.



BUSINESS FIRST

By HUMPHREY PURCELL

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLIER

ONE'S first impression of the man who sat at the big glass-covered desk was that he was young. He could not have been more than thirty, and one wondered whether he could really be the head of the concern that bore his name; but the firmness of his mouth, the force that lay behind his steely glance, and the vigour that showed itself in every movement, chased away one's doubts.

In business Peter Bowler was something of a super-man. He stood for efficiency and the hundred per cent. mark all the time. If he once fell a point or two below par, it was not exactly on a business matter. But that is our story.

"Owen, we've been friends since we were at school," he was saying to the man who stood before him, "I hope we shall be friends yet, but there comes a time when business and friendship can't run together. You have let me down badly over these defalcations of Smith's. If you had done your duty, he couldn't have worked the fraud, and I can't shut my eyes to your share of the responsibility."

Owen Perring uneasily shifted his weight from one foot to the other. "Are you hinting at prosecution?" he asked in a strained voice.

"Good Heavens, no!" said Bowler. "But I am suggesting that you should resign your position as cashier. That is all. I shall not even let my staff know that your going is connected with the swindle, but I can't have you here in a position of responsibility that you won't—or can't—fill with efficiency."

Perring found a chair and threw himself into it. "You are right, of course," he said. "I have been slack—I must have been. But I could have trusted my life with Smith. I'll go at once, Peter."

"I don't suggest that," Bowler said. "Take your own time to find another post. But I'm pushing this business up a steep

hill, and every cog in my machine has got to be sound, or I'll fail."

"Oh, yes," Perring agreed, "I realise as well as you do that machine-like efficiency is just what I lack. I'll go at once, if you don't mind."

So the interview ended.

Bowler sat at his desk, toying with a pen until the nib was split on the glass of his desk. He had dreaded this talk, but it would not have done to let sentiment overrule the most elementary of business maxims. He had done right. He had done the only thing possible.

* * * * *

The next morning was a morning of interviews. Spriggins, Bowler's senior clerk, chuckled with sardonic glee as, one after another, four candidates for the vacant post of cashier came discomfited through the door of the chief's room. In the wake of the fourth came the boss himself.

"Nothing doing, Spriggins," he said, leaning over the clerk's shoulder and reading the topmost letter on his desk. "Try the other agency. That was a bad bunch. The young man who's just gone out is a B.A., B.Sc., and goodness knows what else, but he couldn't tell me the stamp duty on an American bill."

"Yes, sir," Spriggins assented dutifully.

"Now bring in the mail. We'll have to hustle. There's a board meeting in Regent Street at eleven-thirty, and I've two men to see before lunch, haven't I? Fix the next lot of interviews for nine-thirty tomorrow, and, by the way, get me Bensons on the 'phone, and after them Ponsonby. Don't be long with the mail."

He retired to his room, running his fingers through his short wiry hair, but he was out again within a few seconds to shout further orders. Before Spriggins had got the second telephone call through, the chief had impatiently seized the mail and taken it in himself

When Spriggins at length found time to approach the Presence, he was halted on the threshold, for, as he entered, the other door of the sanctum—which was usually kept locked—opened, too, and framed in the dark mahogany lintels Spriggins saw a picture which stirred even his cobwebby heart to flutter.

She was small, but upright, and the bloom on her cheek was put there by health alone. Her eyes were wide open inquiringly, and her lips parted over teeth that would have graced any dentifrice advertisement.

"Is this Mr. Perring's room?" she asked. Then, realising that Bowler's was the only desk it contained, she added: "It can't be, of course, but perhaps you can tell me which is."

Spriggins cleared his throat for speech, but Bowler threw him a glance that sent him through the door and back to his desk. He heard the girl speak one more word, however, that kept him wondering for the rest of the morning:

"Peter!"

When Spriggins had gone, Bowler locked the door after him. Then he stood, his shoulders straight and his vigorous chin held well back, and surveyed the girl. Her expressive eyes, dark brown and shaded by long lashes, seemed familiar, but beyond that—

"I expect you don't remember me," she said, resting her hands on the back of his visitors' chair. "I'm Brenda Dalton."

With a quick movement and a quick smile Peter took her hand in both his. "I've never thought of you like this, Brenda," he said. "You were all pigtail and big black bow when I saw you last. And how is everyone in Wiscard? I heard from Dick a few months back; he is doing well in Rhodesia."

"Yes; we are proud of Dick," she replied. "I'll tell you about the others by and by, but will you please say where I can find Owen?"

Peter's face was averted, and she did not see the tightening of his lips, but when he faced her his eyes betrayed that he had unpleasant news.

"Owen is not here to-day," he said.

"But he is not at his lodgings, either," she returned quickly. "I have been there, and his landlady told me he left last night. Oh, Peter, where is he?"

"I have no idea where he is," he said slowly and unwillingly, "but I'll get

inquiries made. What time is your train home?"

She did not answer immediately, and he noticed a handkerchief clasped in her gloved hands. "I must see him," she said at last, simply and earnestly. "It is difficult to explain in a word or two. I have left home, this morning—unexpectedly, but quite finally—and as Owen and I are engaged, I naturally want to see him very badly."

Peter sat down at his desk and lifted the telephone receiver. "I'll get an inquiry agent to work," he explained.

"No, not a detective!" she cried. "You know how sensitive he is. And I'm not so helpless that I can't carry on without him."

"What are you going to do, then?" he asked, hanging up the receiver. "Have you any plans? Do you propose to stay in Town?"

She dropped into the big leather chair she had been leaning against, and her handkerchief flitted quickly across her pretty eyes. "I can use a typewriter, and take down dictation in shorthand," she said. "I expect I can find some work to do. But, Peter, haven't you any idea why Owen isn't here? Can't you even guess the explanation of his—his disappearance just when I need him so badly?"

Bowler looked at the plaintive figure in his big chair—the child he had played with when she could scarcely toddle; the sister of Dick, who had been his boyhood's friend until the seas parted them; the *fiancée* of the other man who had been his friend until yesterday. There was no need to ask the precise reason for her coming to Town so impulsively. He knew her step-mother, and he could guess as much as she might tell him.

He could not tell her the truth—that he had sacked the man she loved, for inefficiency. He could not break her heart. He could not be a brute.

"I have no idea at all," he said. "But if it is possible to find out without using a detective, I will. I'll send one of my clerks at once. Meantime, Brenda, you must come and stay with my sister and me. I'll fix you up in a position of some sort, if need be. There's a lot I want to hear about Wiscard, and Edith will be overjoyed to have a visitor."

He rang up his sister, saw Brenda into a taxi, and then went back to his desk to send Spriggins on a personal hunt for Perring,

and to figure out what he was going to do when Perring was brought back.

This visit of Brenda's disturbed him. Little things about her raked up old memories. There was the faint musical inflexion in her voice—the suspicion of an "accent"—that he had not heard for five years. There was an air about her, too, that spoke of home—the sum total of little mannerisms that had once been familiar. Above all, there was the sweetness of her youth and prettiness—a sweetness that had appealed to him even in her flapper days. It appealed twenty times more strongly now, for Bowler was no lady's man, and he seldom met youth and beauty such as Brenda's.

For the girl's own sake, and for the sake of all she stood for, he was committed to do all he could to help her. Helping her meant helping Owen Perring, but for once business principles would have to go to the wall. He would have to slip below the hundred per cent. mark. He had sacrificed his friendship for Perring for business efficiency, but he could not sacrifice Brenda's happiness.

He would take Perring back. He would find him a job where he could not do much harm, give him enough to marry on, and promise him more if he could muster up some sort of business ability. That would be sufficient to put the pair of them on the road to happiness.

* * * * *

But unfortunately Spriggins did not bring Perring back. He spent the whole of that day and of the next making inquiries, but they led nowhere. Perring had vanished.

A week passed without news. Peter saw the colour fade from Brenda's cheeks. She did not put her fears into words, but he could read in her eyes the suspicion that something tragic had happened. He could read, too, the suspicion that he knew more than he had told her. He tried to buoy up her hopes with little stories of Owen's eccentricities—how he had once before stayed from the office for a week, to take a solitary walking tour because business and the City bored him. But she was not convinced.

He consulted his sister. Edith had gained Brenda's confidence, and so far as the girl could be happy she was happy in their comfortable home, and in the secretarial work that Peter had found for her in a friend's office.

"You will have to find him or get some news of him," Edith said. "If you told her

that he had been knocked down by a 'bus and killed, the news wouldn't distress her more than the uncertainty."

"You mean—or, rather, you say—it isn't Owen she wants so much as news of Owen?"

"Perhaps. She doesn't know what to think. There is nothing to put a limit to the roavings of her imagination."

"I'll get some news," Peter said. "Do you know, Edith, I feel partly responsible. If I hadn't sacked Owen, she would have been the happiest girl alive during these past few days."

"My own hope," Edith answered, "is that Owen has gone to Australia, or Timbuctoo, and left no address!"

The next morning Peter rang up the inquiry agency that he had been on the point of consulting ten days before. By the evening he had learned that Owen was in Town. He had called for letters the day before at his former lodgings.

That evening, too, Brenda had news. She had written home, asking for letters to be sent on to a post office. After a week one had come from Owen, saying he had left Bowler's office because he hated the atmosphere of the place, and was making holiday. It was postmarked Sussex, but gave no address.

Two days later a man from the agency telephoned Peter that he had found Owen, under a changed name, employed by Mostyn and Salter—Bowler's keenest business rivals.

Peter got on the telephone to the firm at once. He inquired for Orton Phillips, and when Owen answered to that name, asked him to call. Owen came.

"I am surprised to find you with Mostyns," Peter said.

Owen smiled a weak smile. "No doubt. But a man must sell what wares he has. I couldn't ask you for a reference; all I could do was to offer for sale the special knowledge I gained with you."

Peter's chin hardened. "I am not criticising your action," he said.

"Thank you," Owen returned. "I hate doing it, but they give me five hundred a year at present. If you can help me to anything better, I'll leave right away."

"I can't," Peter answered. "But I didn't send for you because you are with Mostyn and Salter. I sent for you to tell you Brenda has been in Town for nearly a fortnight, looking for you and worrying because she can't find you."

"Brenda! What is she doing here? Where is she staying?"

"At my house. Will you come down this evening and meet her?"

me as an ox to the slaughter?" he said at length fiercely. "You've told her your version of our parting, I suppose, and your sister will have helped you out. She has as little opinion of me as you have—for what that is worth! No doubt Brenda is now prepared to administer the *coup de grâce* to her worthless suitor. Is that the position?"

"It is not," Peter said icily. "I have no motive for maligning you. I am only interested to bring you and Brenda together."

Owen continued to walk up and down the carpet. "You threw



"For a moment all three stood in awkward silence."

Owen rose excitedly. His expression was almost a scowl. For a moment he paced up and down the room. "You want to lead

our friendship to the dogs a fortnight ago," he gibed. "Why should you take this benevolent interest in my affairs now?"

And, by the way, when did you first hear of Brenda's leaving home? The day *before* she came, I'll be bound! You knew the day you sacked me, for a hundred pounds!"

Peter rose also and stood looking into the eyes of the man he had been trying to befriend. His instinct was to kick him out of the office. But restraint was one of the

Brenda's confidence in you should not be shaken. But if you have mistaken my motives, she may have done so, too. I'll tell her to-night that I've heard from you—no more than that—and give her your name and address."

Owen flushed hotly. "Tell her nothing!" he said. "I will tell her all there is to be told. You have done your best to steal my reputation because I did not come up to your mad standard of efficiency, but you



"Peter spoke first. 'I was just inviting Owen to dine with us this evening, Brenda,' he said."

fundamentals of Peter's efficiency creed, and now and again he exercised it.

"As a matter of cold fact," he said, "I've been searching for you for the past fortnight to offer you your old salary with me, so that

shall not steal anything else, if I can help it!"

Bowler stood in thought. He knew Owen Perring well. He did not believe for a moment that he would have spoken so if

his temper had not got the better of him. He did not believe, either, that he would keep this unworthy position with Mostyn and Salter for longer than a few days. Owen was erratic in action, but he was sound enough at heart.

"As you wish," he said. "I will say nothing—until after you have seen her."

Owen's fingers were on the handle of the door. "What do you mean by that?" he demanded.

Before Peter could answer, a knock came from the other side of the door. Owen turned the handle, and Brenda entered. For a moment all three stood in awkward silence. Neither Brenda nor Owen advanced to greet the other.

Peter spoke first. "I was just inviting Owen to dine with us this evening, Brenda," he said. "I had planned it as a surprise for you."

"But I'm afraid I'm booked already," Owen interrupted nervously. "Brenda, let's go somewhere where we can talk now. I've volumes to tell you."

"This room is as good a place as any for a few minutes," Brenda answered. "I want to ask a question. Peter, why did you lie to me about Owen?"

"Lie!" echoed Peter.

"Let me tell you what I overheard to-day at lunch," she said. "Two men were talking—I couldn't help hearing—and one was telling as a great joke how Owen, after spending three years on a low salary in your office, has got a good post on the strength of what he knows of your methods and connection. Why didn't you tell me he had left to do that?"

"Because it isn't true," said Peter, signing to Owen to be silent. "He didn't leave for that reason."

"Then why did he leave?"

"Because we didn't work well together. I suggested he should go. That is the only thing I concealed from you. Now, I am sure you two must have a lot to say to each other. Let me ring up your firm and explain that you won't be back, Brenda."

"No, I must go back," she said. "I have to take notes of a meeting in half an hour."

"I have an appointment, too," said Owen.

They left together. From his window Peter watched them go out into the street. Outside the doorway they paused. Then

Owen held out his hand, and they parted to go their different ways.

* * * * *

Peter sat down at his desk again with a feeling that he had badly mismanaged things. He was right down near the nought per cent. mark. Yet he could not blame himself for anything he had done. He had aimed at the happiness of the girl whose helplessness had appealed to him so forcibly, and of the man who had been his friend. He had brought them together that they might grasp this happiness, and they just wouldn't do it.

With a grunt he banged his hand on the bell that summoned Spriggins, and hurled at the head of that gentleman a multitude of commissions that kept him breathless until six o'clock.

That evening Peter confided in his sister and, with a helpless gesture, demanded what he was to make of things.

"Owen—fool that he is—considers that I've wronged him," he concluded. "As for Brenda, Heaven knows what she thinks. I suppose I've just butted into a lovers' tiff, which is something outside my ken, and I'd better cease trying to understand."

"Yes, Peter," Edith agreed. "But if you'll open your eyes for the rest of the evening, you may possibly observe that you have achieved something already. Brenda isn't worrying. Listen to her at this moment."

From the adjoining drawing-room came the music of the latest fox-trot, rendered as to brass and saxophone by Edith's gramophone, and as to piano and voice by Brenda.

Peter listened for a few moments. "I had thought it would be better if she left here to find lodgings," he exclaimed, "but I simply could not suggest it to her."

"I should think not," said Edith.

The tune ended, and in its place they heard the intoxicating music of the trio from "Iolanthe": "If you go in, you're sure to win."

"If I were you," Edith suggested, "I should join Brenda in the drawing-room and ask her to tell you the words of that song."

"Why? What are they?"

"The last line is something about faint heart and a fair lady!"

Peter, for the first time in ten years, blushed. But he went to the drawing-room, nevertheless, and the gramophone did not continue to play for long.



THE VISITANT

By VICTOR PLARR.

ERE dawn, maybe, there drifted thro' the pale
Moonlight among our roofs on the town's
verge,
The immortal among birds, a nightingale,
And piped her shadowy dirge.



And she who heard had never listened yet
Unto that descant, yet believed in truth
That this was what her sire could not forget
In the far fields of Youth!



'Tis by tradition that we darkly look
On Beauty oft. By legend, by the slow
Speech of old wistful men we read the book
Of Things of Long Ago.



Dimly we gaze, hear darkly, never may
Guess if our vision is what they well knew—
The loved and vanished eyes! Nor can I say
What bird, dear, sang to you!



“‘He was the best of ‘em all, Tooms.’ ‘So I have always maintained, m’lady, if you’ll pardon me,’ said mournful Tooms.”

THE LOST LELYS

By ALICE GRANT ROSMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY S. ABBEY

OLD Lady Winterhaven had never heard of that austere journal “National Art.” How should she? It was one of those wretched modern publications that have barely been in circulation thirty years. And so, when it published the first whisper about the Winterhaven Lelys, she neither saw nor heard of the outrage.

This was as well, perhaps, for she would assuredly have been ready to tear up Fleet Street and massacre the inhabitants to find the villain who had written it.

Yet the comment was mild enough. “National Art” was publishing a Lely number, with reproductions from the National Portrait Gallery.

“Some of the best examples of the artist’s work, however,” finished the accompanying letterpress, “are still in private hands, although, with the present high rate of taxation and the breaking up of many great estates, there is every prospect that the nation will be able to acquire them in time. It will be remembered that two from Lord Strathalpin’s estate were bought last year, and it is an open secret that the even more famous Winterhaven Lelys may soon be in the market. It will be a thousand pities if these are not added to the national collection.”

The article, embellished with photographs of Strathalpin Castle—now the residence

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of Joseph Dunkey, Esq.—and of beautiful Winterhaven Court, never reached the heads of the latter ancient and distinguished house, but it did fall into the hands of an obscure member of the family, thousands of miles away. Then Fate took up the thread.

* * * * *

The Dowager Lady Winterhaven had been a great lady in Victoria's day, and now that democracy was invading her circle, she coldly ignored the intruder, like the fierce old dragon she fondly believed herself to be, retiring to Winterhaven Court on the plea of delicate health.

No one believed her, of course. The world knew that she was poor, but it was not from her telling. The Winterhavens did not discuss their financial condition, good or bad. The thing simply wasn't done.

By the same token, when, in a moment of serious financial stress, the three most beautiful Lelys had to go, there was no publicity about it. The sale was managed quietly by the family solicitors, and too late the nation awakened to the fact that these masterpieces had been in the market.

Howls of protest immediately filled the newspapers, rising to frenzy when it was hinted that the pictures were to be taken out of the country. Subscriptions hastily raised to repurchase them for the nation, however, had to be returned to the donors, for the new owner, through his agents, obstinately refused to sell.

The Dowager Lady Winterhaven was by no means the only person appalled at the scandalous behaviour of this scoundrel, who, having bought the pictures, was selfishly determined to keep them for himself. Yet to her inevitably their loss had the most lasting significance. It was the thin edge of the wedge—the first hint of the passing of the glories of her house.

People said that the old Dowager was breaking up that summer, and no wonder! Fiercely reviling the lawyers for their share in the Lely business, she was met for the first time in her life by the brutal truth.

"Your ladyship must remember that you are no longer the head of the family."

It was true, of course. Sir Richard was of age—poor Dick, who had struggled through Oxford with an allowance totally inadequate, and was now keeping his terms in the Inner Temple.

"I assure you, Dick, those unmitigated villains threw it in my teeth, they did indeed," she told him.

"I'll punch their heads," said Dick obligingly. He enjoyed his aunt's inconsequence as if it were a pantomime, but he was genuinely fond of her. "Come along out and look at the stars," he added, "and I'll tell you how I'm going to earn our living by the sweat of my lily-white brow."

"Fiddlesticks!" said the Dowager unbelievably. "No Winterhaven ever earned his living yet."

"By Jove," said Dick, "then it's high time one of 'em had a stab at it, what?"

"It's a scandal and a disgrace that you should have to do it, Dick," stormed his aunt, "instead of looking after the estate, like your fathers before you. I loathe injustice!"

"Gr-r-r!" growled Dick, and kissed her.

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Lady Winterhaven was wrong about the living, or she had forgotten. Perhaps it was true that she was breaking up. One afternoon there came a letter that brought back to her, in a flash, the past with its bitterness and its splendour, and the poor and desperate present.

"Dear Grandmother," said the letter in a handwriting that was plain and firm and young, "you have probably never heard of me, but I am the daughter of your son Robert, whom you banished to Australia thirty-five years ago because he ragged at Cambridge and was sent down. *He* didn't tell me about it, but I know.

"While I'm in England I want to see the house where he was born, so I will call upon you at four o'clock next Tuesday afternoon. If it is inconvenient for you to receive me, perhaps you will instruct the servants to show me the picture galleries and my father's old rooms.

"MARY WINTERHAVEN."

For quite fifteen minutes after reading this letter old Lady Winterhaven sat very still, shaken and cold. Over the years it had come back to her, that aching trouble of her son. She had never forgiven Bob's father, but *he* hadn't known it. Nobody had. One was outwardly submissive to one's lord and master in Victorian times.

Bob had been "wild" in the accepted standard of the day. He had been expelled from Eton and sent down from Cambridge for just such light-hearted fooling as nowadays we are inclined to regard with indulgence or even admiration.

He was a waster, said Authority, who would bring down his parents' grey hairs in

sorrow to the grave; and it was the fashion to export such miscreants—to send them to Australia or America, or any other country far enough from the parental roof and the parental pride.

Most of them went to perdition obediently enough, but Bob had always been obstinate. Once abroad, he cast off his family grandiloquently, and refused their remittances.

"Flung 'em in their teeth," said old Lady Winterhaven aloud with fierce triumph, then looked round the room, vaguely wondering why the phrase had sounded familiar.

Her gaze fell on the letter again at last. Mary Winterhaven? Lovely Mary Winterhaven—that was the most famous Lely of them all, and some scoundrel was taking it out of the country. The thing was a crying scandal. It ought to be stopped. Bob had always loved that picture. He had called his girl Mary. Mary Winterhaven. . . .

" . . . Whom you banished to Australia because he ragged at Cambridge and was sent down. He didn't tell me about it, but I know."

The hussy blamed *her*, then—the poor dear fellow's mother—almost threatened her, indeed. She was coming here, to see the picture gallery, to see the Lelys.

Old Lady Winterhaven tottered to the bell and rang it violently.

"Send for Sir Richard," she ordered Tooms, the butler. "A telegram, immediately. Beg him to come at once."

"I trust that your ladyship is not ill," said the deferential Tooms.

"Go, fool, go—immediately, I said."

She waved him away. Tooms went, but ventured to return presently with a glass of whisky. Her ladyship's appearance had alarmed him.

"Eh?" she said vaguely, and took the stimulant. "Do you remember Master Robert, Tooms?"

"Very well indeed, m'lady. You may recollect I valeted for the young gentleman the first year I was in your ladyship's service."

"He was the best of 'em all, Tooms."

"So I have always maintained, m'lady, if you'll pardon me," said mournful Tooms, showing eagerness for the first time in years. "A high-spirited young gentleman, and—generous to a fault."

"Yes, yes, but they didn't understand him. They sent him away from me, Tooms. You wouldn't have known that, of course," said Lady Winterhaven, blandly ignoring the fact that the servants' hall

knows everything. "His father banished him to Australia. It broke my heart."

"Your ladyship has had news of Mr. Robert?" questioned Tooms with respectful interest.

"No, no—dead, poor fellow. But there's a daughter, it seems. The girl wants to visit me, Tooms, and I will not have it. I am too old to stand these upsets. See that Sir Richard is sent to me directly he arrives."

"Very good, my lady," said Tooms, with melancholy.

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"What's up, Tooms, do you know?" asked Dick, arriving in haste at dinner-time that evening.

"I fancy her ladyship is a little upset," explained Tooms. "She has received a communication from the late Mr. Robert's daughter."

"Who the devil is the late Mr. Robert?"

"He would have been your first cousin, sir, you remember—her ladyship's youngest and, I understand, favourite son. The young gentleman was sent to Australia by his father many years ago, and now the young lady wishes to visit the family."

"Well, that's all right, surely. Quite a solid notion—home of her ancestors, and all that."

"You'll pardon me, Sir Richard," said Tooms mysteriously, "but if you can see your way to veto the proposed visit, it might be advisable."

"Great Scot, Tooms, but why shouldn't the girl visit her grandmother?"

"An excellent arrangement, of course, Sir Richard," said Tooms, "oh, excellent. But her ladyship is, I fancy, a little prejudiced against the young lady, and I have noticed that, like many of her sex, she is at times inclined to—er—thrive on opposition."

"Eh?" said Dick. "Oh, I see. You mean I should abuse the poor girl, so that my aunt will feel bound to stick up for her? By Jove, Tooms, I didn't know you were such a crafty scoundrel. You ought to have been a dashed diplomat."

"Not at all, sir," said Tooms modestly.

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Dick, acting on the butler's sage advice, found it good. Directly he opposed Mary Winterhaven's visit, his aunt was up in arms in defence of the stranger, determined that poor dear Robert's daughter should receive a proper welcome to the home of her fathers.

Dick, having read the girl's letter mean-

while, was not altogether easy in his mind about her. Bit of a Tartar, he thought, an uncompromising sort of maiden, not one of your clinging kind. Probably wore pince-nez and spoke her mind. Well, in that case he'd be in the soup all right, with a couple of scrapping women on his hands.

Yet when next day, at four o'clock exactly, Mary Winterhaven was announced, he was immediately reassured. She was a slender, tall young creature, who walked into the great drawing-room with the ease of one accustomed to palaces. She was well turned out, too, without looking in the least expensive, which, after all, is the real secret of feminine distinction.

"Are you my grandmother?" she inquired of Lady Winterhaven with calm and distant courtesy.

"So you are good enough to inform me," retorted the old lady.

"Oh, there's no reason why you should believe it, if you'd rather not," said the visitor, faintly smiling. "I understand that even strangers may view the portrait gallery on payment of a shilling. Have I come on an inconvenient day?"

"Don't talk to me about your shillings!" stormed the Dowager. "Sit down immediately and behave like a civilised being. Where's your luggage?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Where's your luggage — luggage — luggage? Don't you understand plain English, girl?"

"Not very plain, perhaps," replied Miss Winterhaven mildly.

"You are pleased to be facetious."

"Oh, always. And now may I see the pictures?"

"Will you be good enough to answer my question?" thundered the old lady. "Where is your luggage?"

"I am spending a few days at the village inn. I believe you call it 'The Pig and Paint Pot.'"

"Preposterous! Send for your cousin's things at once, Richard," ordered Lady Winterhaven, deciding to accept this granddaughter because she was so obviously unwilling to be accepted.

"No," said Mary.

"Richard, do as I say. Do you imagine for one moment that I shall allow your father's daughter to tear about the countryside, staying at village inns?"

"You didn't mind where *he* stayed, did you?" said Mary.

That took the wind very suddenly out of

her grandmother's sails. She looked shaken and old.

"*He* didn't tell you that, Mary," she said, using the girl's name wistfully, as though she had done it all her life.

"Perhaps he wasn't proud of it," said Mary. "But when he—died, and I had to go through his papers, I—found you all out."

There was passion in the young voice for the first time, passion and a hard contempt.

"I *loathe* injustice," said Mary Winterhaven, using her grandmother's favourite phrase with an exactitude of intonation that marked the relationship as nothing else could have done. "Do you think I'd stay a night in the house that was too good for him?"

"Too good?" echoed Lady Winterhaven faintly. "Dick, speak to this raving lunatic! Too good?"

"The fact is, you know," said Dick to the girl, with a rather diffident grin, "I'm the head of the family and all that, and he's always allowed to do as he likes. It's one of the rules. I'd simply hate you to stay at a stuffy little inn at my very gates. It looks so stand-offish of you."

The girl laughed and held out her hand impulsively. "Well, it wasn't your fault, after all," she said. "You weren't even born, were you? So if the house is really yours, I'll stay. But I didn't come here cadging for invitations, remember."

"You leave that to me," advised Dick. "I'm the champion middleweight cadger of this family, and just at the moment I'm cadging for a guest."

* * * * *

That was a curious evening. The girl was still clearly on the defensive, still a little hard, yet inevitably this ancient home of her race had power to move her in unexpected ways. A thousand ghosts, perhaps, pacing these age-old paths, were kin of hers. She who had believed herself aloof and alien knew she could never quite be either again.

"Are you elated?" she asked Sir Richard suddenly, as he took her through the famous sunk garden to the lily pond made for lovely Mary Winterhaven of the Second Charles's day. "Owning all this, I mean?"

"Oh, Heavens, no!" Dick was a simple soul, and to have kept the family penury a secret from this newest member would have seemed to him sheer lunacy. "Bit of a white elephant, the Court," he said. "In fact, a hulking big one. I'll have to try and let the place by and by. Ought to have a

shot at it now, between you and me, but my aunt would be so dashed out up at the idea. It broke her up pretty badly when we had to part with some of the pictures a while ago."

"I read a lot about it in the papers," said Mary. "What did they call them—Seeleys, Keeleys?"

"Lelys," corrected Dick. "You know, the old johnny who painted all the beauties at King Thingamy's Court. There was a namesake of yours among 'em."

"Was there?" said Mary Winterhaven. "I wondered, when I saw all the controversy about the pictures," she continued presently, "if it meant the family was hard up, perhaps."

"Oh, absolutely, up to the hilt. Mortgages no end. A place like this has a pretty stiff valuation," explained Dick, "and when you have to pay thumping death duties on it four times in five years, you're bound to be more or less in the cart. I'm going in for law myself. It seemed simpler than breaking into the Bank of England and getting away with the swag."

"Are you?" said Mary eagerly. She was animated at last, for, being the daughter of a young country, she liked a man to work, and the face that she turned to her cousin now was as lovely as that of any Mary of King Charles's day. Quite unaccountably Dick felt as though he had been made Lord Chancellor of England.

* * * * *

A really efficient liar prepares the ground ahead. Old Lady Winterhaven, however, was a novice in the art. Meeting her newly-discovered grand-daughter in the gallery as she went up to dress for dinner, she accosted her sardonically.



"Do you think I'd stay a night in the house that was too good for him?" "The fact is, you know," always allowed to

"Well, I hope you have paid your shilling, Miss Independence," she said.

Mary smiled, an innocent smile, while there looked down upon her, like a ghostly pageant from the past, the pictured men and women of her race.

"I thought there was a namesake of mine," she said.

"Some of the pictures have gone to be restored," lied the Dowager hastily.

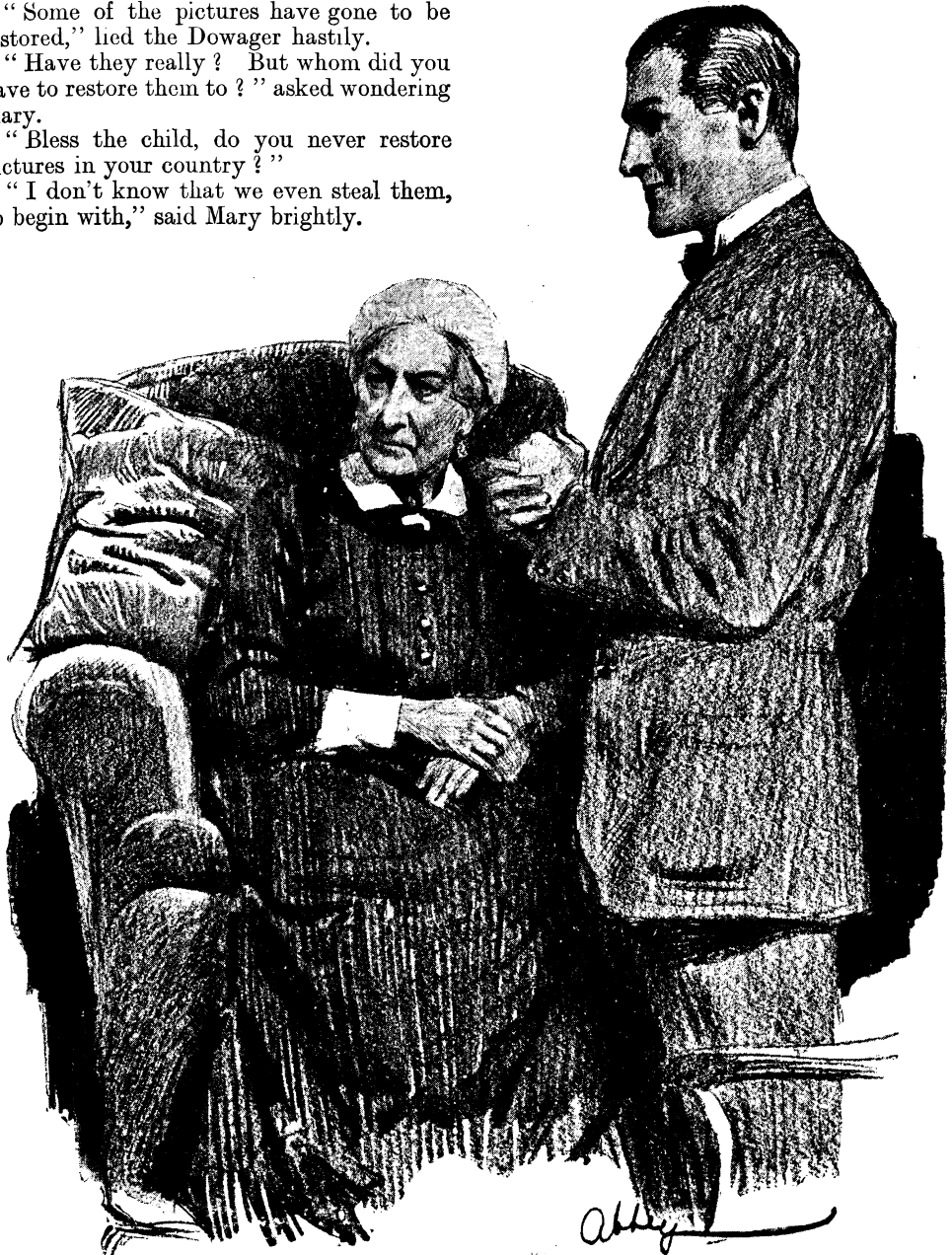
"Have they really? But whom did you have to restore them to?" asked wondering Mary.

"Bless the child, do you never restore pictures in your country?"

"I don't know that we even steal them, to begin with," said Mary brightly.

"Now, what," wondered the bewildered Dowager, "does the hussy mean by that?"

Lady Winterhaven, in short, was uneasy. A personage all her days, she had been treated by the world at large with deference and a certain amount of awe. She liked it. Besides, to be a holy terror by reputation



said Dick to the girl, with a rather diffident grin, 'I'm the head of the family and all that, and he's do as he likes.'"

she had found was often a very useful thing. And now this cool young relative from nowhere walked in and addressed her as though she were no dragon at all, but merely an objectionable old woman. That's what the world was coming to—disintegration.

Yet in her secret heart she liked that, too—the calm poise of this young creature of her blood, who spoke with her own gestures, and hit, as she was wont to do, straight from the shoulder.

Rather pathetically—a sure sign that she felt her day was passing—she wanted to impress this ridiculous child, who believed she was the villainess of her father's story. Lady Winterhaven had not attempted to justify herself in that particular, it will be noticed—she had never justified herself to anybody in the world—but she was determined to cut a dash, to prove that she and Winterhaven Court and the family at large were not the back numbers these modern young upstarts might suppose.

She went to her jewel case, then rang for Tooms. "Get up some Veuve Clicquot, Tooms," she said.

"Very good, m'lady," said the butler, brightening. The Winterhaven table had been frugal of late, but Mr. Robert's daughter—it was the right thing, of course. Tooms approved of it.

"By the way, Tooms," continued her ladyship, "I want you to go to Town for me by the early train to-morrow and take this ring to Brant's. See Brant himself."

"To be reset, m'lady," said Tooms intelligently, wondering why her ladyship didn't send her maid, and rather flattered at the confidential errand.

"Reset? Certainly not," said her ladyship tartly. "Sold."

"Very good, m'lady," said Tooms faintly, trying to look as though it were part of a respectable butler's job to go about selling his mistress's jewels.

"I'll give you a note to Brant," added her ladyship. "And there are several other commissions you can do for me in Town. I shall be entertaining rather more extensively than usual. And have a car sent down from Wimple's for a week, the best they have, with a reliable chauffeur."

Tooms began to look thoroughly upset. This was not the thing at all, not quite *comme il faut*, as he would have put it in the servants' hall.

"If your ladyship will excuse me," he hesitated, "the responsibility is rather a

heavy one in the matter of your ladyship's ring. I feel the delicacy of my position most keenly. Of course, if Sir Richard wishes it——"

Lady Winterhaven stamped her foot. "While I am the mistress of this house, you will do as I say," she commanded, "and if you breathe a word of this matter to Sir Richard or anybody else, let me tell you, Tooms, you will rue the day."

She paused to review this favourite phrase of a past era with some complacency, then turned again upon the agitated servant.

"Tooms, you are a melodramatic fool," she declared. "Don't stand there in that ridiculous, old-family-retainer attitude. I won't have it. I dislike the ring. I wish to be rid of it."

"Very good, m'lady," said Tooms, and departed almost in tears.

Tooms was no modernist. He approved of the aristocracy and took a sort of protective, fatherly interest in its welfare. That the Winterhaven finances were at a low ebb he knew well enough. It was unfortunate, but not alarming. The matter would, no doubt, be adjusted in time, when Sir Richard married money. Tooms had several candidates in his mind's eye, about whom he instituted careful inquiries from time to time, in order that he might drop a tactful word to Richard about them as occasion arose. But when it came to her ladyship's selling her private jewels to do a bit of entertaining, the thing looked bad. Tooms didn't like it at all.

On the great staircase he met the visitor, a shining young creature from the crown of her bright hair to her little satin slippers. She smiled at him, which, of course, was as it should be. Tooms, an earnest student of nice behaviour, reflected that your real aristocrat is never afraid of impairing her dignity by these little courtesies to a servant, and he was gratified to notice that Mr. Robert's daughter lived up to tradition in this particular.

Tooms noticed something else which would most certainly have escaped his less worldly master. Miss Winterhaven's white lace frock, simple as it seemed, bore the unmistakable stamp of the Rue de la Paix. Possibly, then, the young lady was an heiress. That, of course, would simplify many things, with a little luck. She and Sir Richard, now? Excellent!

The butler hastened his footsteps and, crossing the old, timbered hall, made it his business to open one of the long windows

through which Mary Winterhaven was looking out.

"The gardens are well worth seeing from this angle, miss," said Tooms; "a particularly felicitous vista, it is generally considered."

"Thank you," smiled Mary.

"Not at all, miss. If you will pardon the liberty, it is a great pleasure to see you at the Court. I had the honour, as a lad, of valeting for your late father, miss. A very fine, high-spirited young gentleman, and a warm favourite with young and old."

"Oh, *did* you?" said Mary eagerly.

"Yes, indeed, miss. It was a very sad day at the Court when Master Robert went away, though I must admit," added crafty Tooms, "we were all confident the young gentleman would very soon make a fortune in Australia."

"I'm afraid he thought so, too, poor dear," said Mary, with a wistful smile.

"In those days, miss," said Tooms, "we were, perhaps, over-prone to imagine that gold nuggets were to be picked up in the streets of Australia, a view that no doubt would amuse you, knowing the country. I trust, however, that Mr. Robert prospered and met with the happiness he undoubtedly deserved."

"He was very happy, thank you," smiled the girl, "though he *didn't* make his fortune."

"Thank *you*, miss," said Tooms, and departed sorrowfully.

So she was no heiress, after all? A thousand pities, thought Tooms—oh, a thousand pities! A lady and an ideal mate for Sir Richard, an ideal mistress for Winterhaven Court and Tooms!

Well, there you were.

Nevertheless, heiress or not, the young lady was going to make things hum, Tooms found, though he would not, of course, have expressed it so vulgarly.

Dinner that night was a ceremonial at which Lady Winterhaven presided, a very great lady indeed, bent, one would have suspected, upon impressing—or suppressing—the stranger, only that with the younger generation one cannot really do either.

Dick, watching his aunt's tactics with all a normal man's uneasiness at the use of weapons purely feminine, had to admit that Mary Winterhaven stood the test with unexpected grace, even the inevitable discussion of family topics.

"I trust your father was able to provide for you," Lady Winterhaven said graciously

to her guest. "He would normally have benefited to some extent under his father's will, had he not chosen to go his own way in spite of us."

Mary, remembering what Dick had told her of the family poverty, smiled faintly.

"Oh, he couldn't provide for me much, poor darling," she said, "but my maternal grandfather left me a legacy. That is how I was able to come to England."

"Indeed?" Lady Winterhaven's tone was cold. She resented these people who left legacies to her grand-daughter. "I am very much surprised that your maternal relatives should permit a girl of your age to rush about the world alone," she said.

"I'm afraid they couldn't stop me," explained Mary.

"Ah, well, perhaps we do not understand your colonial ways. I must show you something of English life, my dear."

"Thank you," said Mary, and winked at the head of the house.

He, poor helpless male, became before twenty-four hours had passed both bewildered and alarmed. He had spent the two years of his majority trying to make one pound do the work of five, a pretty strenuous exercise when you haven't been reared to it from the cradle.

His aunt had hitherto assisted him, like the game old dragon she was, and therefore, when the car arrived from Wimple's and Lady Winterhaven spoke nonchalantly of dinner-parties and luncheons, and it seemed clear they were about to burst out into a sudden orgy of entertaining, Dick began to suspect that her grand-daughter's arrival had upset the Dowager's mental balance. It was all very well, but where was it going to stop? They didn't want their creditors in a howling mob about their ears. He tried to hint as much, and was promptly told to mind his own business, which was exactly what he supposed it to be.

"Do you think I'll have that girl going back to her wretched relatives to tell them her father's family is on the verge of bankruptcy?" stormed Lady Winterhaven.

"But, I say," expostulated Dick, "she's not in the least likely to do that, surely? She seems such a jolly little sport, and I am sure she would be quite happy without a lot of fussing with the county."

"Happy?" retorted Lady Winterhaven tartly. "I am not concerned with her happiness, Richard. I am concerned with the credit of the family."

Dick gave it up, and decided—the usual

masculine refuge—that women were beyond him. He was obviously worried, however, though he did his best to conceal the fact from Mary, a young lady far too wideawake for that to be possible.

Tooms also showed wear and tear, since he held the secret of his mistress's sudden extravagance. He followed her about, a mixture of watch-dog and sick nurse, with an anxious look in his eye.

Her ladyship was inclined to be a little harsh to her grand-daughter, he noticed, and that troubled him, too. He endeavoured tactfully to soften the picture.

"You will have noticed her ladyship's portrait as a bride, miss," he insinuated one morning. "A very great beauty she was considered in those days, and extremely popular in Society. She has, of course, greatly changed. Your father's departure, miss, changed her ladyship considerably—her favourite son, you see. It was a great grief."

"Then why," said Mary, with impulsive heat, "did she let them send him away?"

"Ah, you didn't know the late Sir Richard, miss," explained Tooms, shaking his head. "A very high-handed gentleman when he put his foot down, if I may venture to say so. One of the old school, miss."

"Oh!" said Mary.

That, of course, opened her eyes a little. A girl of spirit, and sensitive to atmosphere, she was sufficiently like her grandmother to understand, now that the key had been given her, the curious mixture of kindness and antagonism with which she had been met.

At first, in her anger against these people who had sent her father into exile, she had very humanly rejoiced at the rumours of their poverty and the loss of the family treasures. This was retribution, always pleasing to contemplate when it follows the enemy. But since she had seen the Court, somehow that feeling, in spite of herself, had changed. And suddenly the gallant old woman, facing new conditions and threatened with poverty and blandly ignoring both, seemed to the girl a pathetic figure.

Yet she was puzzled, too. This was not poverty as she had known it, as her father had known it even more bitterly, poor darling.

The dinner-party that night, when the county assembled to meet her, the *chef* from Town, the gorgeous plate and glass, her grandmother's diamonds—these things

were hardly compatible with desperately straitened means.

She looked often down the long table at Richard and wondered. Dick was a dear, and if he were really poor, it was a shame, she impulsively decided. She wanted to put things right for him, to take that little look of worry out of his eyes, to help him with all those schemes he had gradually revealed to her—the things he would have done for the estate if fortune and the Fates had been a little kinder. It had not seemed odd to either Dick or Mary that in a few brief days she had discovered what even her grandmother did not guess—the boy's real passion for this home of his fathers.

When the last guest had gone, the two young people stood for a moment on the terrace, looking over the sleeping garden.

"Well, old thing, bored to tears?" asked Dick.

"No, I was dazzled, of course," said Mary, faintly mocking. "Wasn't I expected to be?"

Dick threw back his head and laughed. "I say, you do see through us, don't you?" he said.

"No, I don't," retorted Mary. "You're an absolute enigma. You tell me you are poor, but just look at all this. I've been poor most of my life, but that meant living in a tiny house with hardly any servants, making my own frocks, doing without things."

"You poor little soul! And then we swank like this to impress you. By Jove, what cads you must think us!"

"To impress me?" Mary Winterhaven's quick wit saw it in a flash. "You mean you don't usually entertain like this—it's all on my account?"

"Oh, rather!" Dick blundered on. "My aunt is up in arms for the honour of the family, and all that—wants to show you what big pots we really are."

"So *that's* why you are worried?" said Mary slowly.

"Worried? Me? Good Heavens, no! Whatever made you think such a thing?"

"Dick, you are an awfully nice liar, but a pretty bad one," said Mary. "I shall go back to Town to-morrow."

Nor could Dick's urgent remonstrances against such a course move her in the least, and when he came down next morning, he was horrified to learn she had already gone.

Tooms, it seemed, knew all about it—had found out the trains for her, ordered

the car, and seen to the luggage. There was an air of conspiracy about Tooms, which was not to be wondered at, seeing that Mary had caught him locking up the night before, and, having sworn him to secrecy, made him a momentous confidence.

"Tooms, I'm sailing for Australia very suddenly," the girl explained. "Probably by the *Oceana* next Friday, if I can get a berth. Before I leave London I'm going to send a case of pictures to you, and I want you to wait until you see in *The Times* that my boat has sailed. Then you can unpack them and hang them in the gallery when nobody is looking."

"Pictures, miss?" said Tooms dubiously. He hardly liked to point out that one didn't hang ordinary pictures in the Winterhaven gallery, for no doubt the young lady meant it kindly.

"Yes," said Mary. "As a matter of fact, they're the Lelys. I bought them and meant to take them home; but, after all, they belong to the Court, and Sir Richard ought to have them. Of course, he'd refuse if I offered them to him, but when I'm at sea he'll have no chance. Now, mind, you've sworn not to tell a soul, Tooms."

"On my honour, miss," said Tooms piously. "And if you'll permit me to say so, Miss Mary, it's a beautiful and generous thought, worthy of Mr. Robert himself."

"Nonsense!" said Mary. "Sir Richard is the head of the house, and ought to have them."

There was something else Sir Richard ought to have, Tooms considered. Why, they were made for each other, and the young lady, since she had bought the Lelys, must be an heiress, after all. Even if she weren't—Tooms threw away his match-making dreams in reckless adoration of Mr. Robert's daughter.

Being a perfect gentleman, he couldn't give the young lady away, of course, but there was one thing he could do. He could note her London address on the luggage, and give it carelessly to Sir Richard, which, after all, was very useful of Tooms, Miss Winterhaven having omitted this detail in the little farewell letter of apology she left for her grandmother.

If the British Constitution had suddenly collapsed, Lady Winterhaven could not have been more upset than at this sudden and scandalous departure of her upstart young relative. For the first time in his life Dick saw his aunt in tears. Out of the chaos of anger and invective to which she

treated him one thing became astoundingly clear. Mary must not be permitted to go back to her own country. She must come and live with her grandmother, like the Winterhaven she was.

This prospect so suddenly illuminated the world for Dick that he saw his own heart. Between hope and fear, like every lover since the world began, he rushed up to London and reached Mary's hotel not many hours after her own arrival there.

"Oh, Dick," said Mary, reproachful and a little white, "you shouldn't have come! It isn't fair of you to spoil my running away!"

"I say, you know, I simply couldn't stand it," said Dick, "your chucking us like that. Were we so beastly to you, Mary?"

"You were a perfect dear, but, you see, I decided suddenly to go home to Australia. I—think I'm homesick," said Mary.

"By Jove, that's an awful blow," said Dick, "your being homesick, I mean."

Mary looked at him. "Oh, well, perhaps it was—lovesick I really meant," she suggested.

"By Jove, that's even worse! I'm an awful fool. I might have guessed there was some lucky devil waiting for you out there—must be crowds of 'em, of course. You know I haven't a bean, Mary, or precious few, but I love you, and it wouldn't exactly have been a little house and making your own frocks."

"Oh, Dick, I'd do more than that for you," said Mary.

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"All the same," she added firmly, a little later, "you'll have to go out and catch a special licence and marry me at once before we go back to the Court, or I won't answer for the consequences. Grandmother is sure to have a fit at your wanting to marry me, and even if she gave in at last, she'd want to run us into the expense of a Society wedding."

This was crafty of Mary. She did not in the least believe her grandmother would interfere. From the beginning she had been oddly conscious that the dragon liked her. But she wanted to get Dick safely married while he believed that she was poor, in case some silly, old-fashioned scruple should overtake him.

Dick believed he was being crafty, too. The idea of being married to Mary immediately was such a complete picture of heaven to him that he did not admit that his aunt had actually sent him to bring her back, but

dashed gaily off in a taxi to look for the Archbishop of Canterbury, who guards the special licences for impatient bridegrooms.

When he had gone, Mary did a little urgent business at the telephone and wrote a brief note to Tooms. Therefore, when Sir Richard and the new Lady Winterhaven drove up to the Court the next afternoon, they found the Dowager in a state of collapse in the hall.

"The world has gone mad, stark, staring mad, Dick!" she exclaimed excitedly. "Tooms has gone mad! The Lelys—they have come back mysteriously. They're hanging in the gallery, unless I've taken leave of my senses."

"I expect they have been restored, grandmother," said wicked Mary.

"Restored? Don't talk nonsense, child. The things had been sold," scolded her grandmother, "sold to some villain who was taking them out of the country. However, I am glad to see *you* have come to your senses and returned like a Christian to your father's home. Don't let me hear any

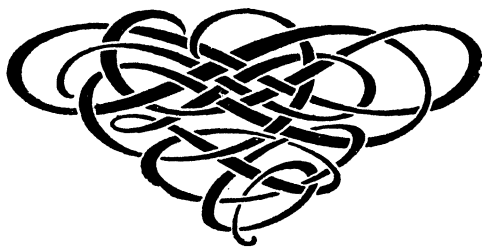
more about returning to Australia. I won't have it."

"As a matter of fact," interposed Dick rather nervously, "I made sure of her this time. We were married by the registrar this morning."

"Married! Registrar!" cried the Dowager in horrified amazement. "Scandalous! You must be mad, Richard! Registrar indeed! I shall send for the vicar immediately. Ring for Tooms, Dick. Send the fool here. He's mad, or I'm mad, or the pictures are a forgery. They've come back, Dick, I tell you—the Lelys! The whole world's mad! What can be the meaning of it?"

Dick, rushing away in search of Tooms, didn't know, of course, but Mary laughed and sat on the arm of the dragon's chair.

"It's all right grandmother" she said, and kissed her. "They aren't forgeries, and nobody's mad. You won't give me away to Dick just yet—will you?—but I was the villain who bought them. You see, the innocent old darling has married money."



IN A FAIR FIELD.

IN a fair field such beauty lies,
No one its like can well discover;
Oh, what a sight for homing eyes,
For one who has roamed the wide world over!

Where the great mountain ranges run,
And the clouds kiss, are joy and madness;
But a fair field beneath the sun—
Oh, there is beauty without sadness!

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.



"... addressed the raw-faced one as 'Aunt Mildred'!"

GOING TO THE DOGS

By L. R. BRIGHTWELL, F.Z.S.

Illustrated by the Author

I AM a quiet man, and so long as I can oscillate peacefully between my office, my club, and my home, may be guaranteed to trouble nobody. Like most inoffensive men, I am a dog-lover. My wife is a dog-lover, but in a different way. My own dog cost five shillings, and is only known to the local cats. My wife's dogs are known throughout the dog world, and, I freely confess, contribute largely to the upkeep of our household. If I mention that my wife's dogs constitute the Krambourn Kennels—well, I shall have said enough for all "doggy" and many other readers. At the club I am allowed to possess a certain personality. At the Krambourn Kennels I am Mrs. ———'s husband. What mere man could compete with the dazzling refulgence of, say, Krambourn Stardust, that blinding planet of the Baratarian wolf dog firmament?

Apart from some years of Franco-Flemish travel, during the recent strained relationships upon the Continent, my life has been one of unbroken calm. The kennels may contribute to my peaceful life; they have never actually come into it until the other day. It began on a Monday night. "Stardust" was to be "shown" on the morrow, and neither of the kennel maids

was available. The senior was away on leave, the junior almost wholly occupied with "Darling Girl of Bannockburn" and a hundred guineas' worth of day-old puppies. And then my wife developed "flu."

Now, I have never before desired to emulate the brutal husband of the modern drama, but really I think that on this occasion I ought to have shown a little more firmness. However, I did not. At five-thirty of a March morning I paraded by candlelight before the invalid for my final instructions. Said a feeble voice somewhere below the boudoir cap that just showed between the pillow and the eider-down:

"George!"

"Yes, dear?"

"Are you quite sure you've got everything?"

"Yes, dear."

"The ticket, and the labels, and the show cards?"

"Yes, dear."

"And Stardust's travelling coat?"

"Yes, dear."

"Oh—and, George, has Stardust had a good breakfast?"

"Yes, dear."

This was quite true; he had eaten the breakfast for which I had had no time myself.

An interval of sneezing.

"George!"

"Yes, dear?"

"You will be careful with him, won't you?"

"Yes, dear."

"Oh—and, George, you've got all his food with you, haven't you? You know he won't eat that stuff the Matt people supply at the show."

"Yes, dear."

"Oh, George"—a new note of anxiety had crept into the husky whisper—"oh, George, you won't let anything dreadful happen to him, will you?"

"Ye—no, of course not."

"Supposing, George, there was a railway accident! You know *Stardust* is irreplaceable."

* * * * *

It is a goodish step to Chalk Cliff Station, especially at 5.30 a.m. on an empty stomach.

I hope I am not a morbid man, but when later *Stardust*, cloaked, fed, and heavily insured, hauled me stationwards along the desolate parade, I couldn't help glancing wistfully towards the leaden sea. But I crunched at a dog biscuit and drew some comfort from it. It reminded me of dramatic but care-free days upon the Somme. Thanks to a vagrant cat that scudded steadily before us, we reached the station in good time, and we lined up in a queue of unknown men and women, attached to dogs whose names are household words throughout the kennel clubs of Europe and America. At the best the humans shone with reflected glory. A lady on the outskirts of fog pointed me out to an unseen companion as "the man who lives at the Krambourn Kennels. A husband, I believe, dear." Then they opened the gates, and we surged through, hauling at or hauled by dogs worth a university professor's annual salary, clutching at kennels and cages, or staggering beneath gargantuan travelling boxes. Three times did *Stardust* and I career madly up and down that platform, vainly searching for a carriage not already crowded with the friends of man. Then the guard recognised me. To the guard I am a man, not merely something necessary to the upkeep of a Baratarian wolf-hound.

"Early this morning, sir!" he said, and

then caught sight of *Stardust*, and grinned. "All right, sir, if you don't mind the van. I've an egg box you can sit on. How's that? Right away!" And so we left the station. I presume the engine whistled, though it might have exploded and remained unheard.

"Not much call for us to advertise our coming, eh, sir?" shouted the guard genially, as he trod on a thousand guineas' worth of Pekingese, and narrowly escaped having his coat torn from him by an Airedale whose sale might have provided him with a new wardrobe every day of his life. We sat together on a box labelled "Too Too Chang-fu of Upper Tooting" and the guard, making a gramophone trumpet of his hands, favoured me with reminiscences of the many "show" trains he had seen. I gathered that he judged them from the standpoint of the monetary compliments paid to him by grateful exhibitors. Cat shows ranked low in the scale. "Old ladies and curates, poor as church mice." Poultry was apparently "none so bad," though trying on a night train, owing to the cockerels hailing the dawn each time they ran through a lighted station.

"Of course, if you're out for quiet," yelled the guard, "there's nothing to touch cattle. You see, they never. . . Here you are, sir. Mind that greyhound; she's rubbed her muzzle off. Here you are, sir! Victoria!"

Nothing went right—I mean wrong, of course—upon this dog-ridden day. There was no fog on the suburban line to Islington, the taxi to the Culticultural Hall refused to break down. It was a day of queues. I might have been back with the B.E.F. We queued for half an hour to gain admission to the hall, and we queued for another hour to pass the vet. Of course, he passed *Stardust*. We went through in a flash, though I entertained a wild hope he might proclaim an outbreak of Isle of Wight disease, or whatever it is dogs have. But no. "Hah, *Stardust*," said the man of dogs gaily, and without a glance at me. "Next! Take *both* his overcoats off, please."

It was a typical all-British dog show. We tramped, *Stardust* and I, through yelping groves of Pekingese, Samoyeds, Schipperkes, Bruxelles-Griffons, dogues de Bordeaux, chow-chows, dachshunds, Pomeranians, Dalmatians, Russian deerhounds, German boarhounds, French bulldogs, Italian greyhounds, Zam-bucks, Polugies, Char-binghas, and worse till we came to

anchor, the one a star, the other a cipher, in an endless avenue of the dog of the day, the Baratarian wolf-hound. I began to realise what I had let myself in for, after Stardust had broken his leash in a playful endeavour to foregather with a passing bulldog. It was now impossible to leave him even for a moment. I gazed hopelessly around the boiling crowd, above which towered a perfect forest of labels. A few read at random went thus: Samoyeds, bulldogs. This show disinfected by Matts. Ring forty-seven, Bulgehounds. Ring

lapel was labelled "Matts" in letters that had once been red. He took me under his dirty sleeve, so to speak, and all my troubles ceased, comparatively.

"Broke 'is leash, sir? That's aw right, I'll get you a chain, eighteenpenny one, quite good enough. No, *you* don't want a cat'logue. Wait till arternoon; they'll be sellin' it a bob then. When yer goin' to be judged? 'Leven o'clock? Not you. Judges won't be 'ere till three—prob'ly send a wire sayin' won't judge till four o'clock. *I'll* tell yer wot ring you're showin' in. Don't *you* worry. Wait 'ere till I brings yer chain along."

He brought it in an hour's time. In the meanwhile I sat on the edge of the bench



"The Pom retired, shrieking, under the bookstall."

number nine. This show disinfected by Matts. Ring forty-three, Baratarians judged at eleven o'clock. This show disinfected by Matts. No smoking in the toy dogs' hall.

Bewildered, I lowered my troubled gaze once more to crowd-level, where fiendish youths fought their way screaming "Cat'logue—all the awards an' prizes, five shillin'! Cat'logue!" Then I met the man from Matts. May he rise to keep a dog shop of his own, and do a roaring trade. He was a small dry man, in a smock coat which had once been white, whereof each

and waited whilst dreadful people, their clothes covered with paw marks, eyed me askance, or commented more or less approvingly on Stardust. A tall man, with a red raw face and the butt end of a cigarette depending from his lower lip, informed me that Stardust had his (Stardust's) grandmother's ears. He then dived into a capacious breeches pocket and fished up a crushed packet of Woodbines, much involved with a ball of string and a piece of raw meat. But he got a Woodbine free at last and solicited a match. The cigarette inspired him to rhapsodise.

"Yes, gran'ma's ears," he said. "Half the dogs here to-day got no ears at all. But she's all right—good stuff in those Krambourn Kennels. Want more of it. His dam a wonderful animal, too. What's that—you're Mrs. Banstoke's husband? 'Flu? Ah, bad luck not bein' here herself! Never let anybody show my dogs for me. Yes, gran'ma's ears. I remember her well. Splendid chest and forequarters. Beautiful broken-up face. Heaps of stuff under the eyes. *Bone*, too!"

Now, this is just the sort of attitude towards a dog which I cannot stand.

"Surely, sir," I ventured to protest, "surely mere bone is not what binds the dog to man. Surely the dog should be primarily a friend, not merely a collection of 'points.' You may value these pedigree beasts around us at three figures each, if you like, but I am convinced that a man may for five shillings purchase just as much undying love and flawless fidelity, just as much unquestioning obedience and sympathy. Why, sir. . . ."

The dog man fixed me at this point with a stony glare. But I was determined to have my say, and would have done so, had not a spindle-legged child, with a spaniel puppy under each arm, straddled up and addressed the raw-faced one as "Aunt Mildred"! After that I thought I would have a quiet chat with the man from Matts. I found him stripping a Bedlamham terrier.

"Ullo, sir!" he said, looking over his shoulder. "Young lady just asked me if I was goin' to 'eat' the little dawg arter I'd plucked him. Funny things, children! By the way, wouldn't leave your dog too long, sir—lots of thieves about 'ere." I went back, disconsolate and apprehensive, and sat upon the bench for another hour, staring at the Egyptian frieze upon the wall opposite, whereon the aristocrats of a bygone time were seen fondling dogs of strange and wondrous shape. So the trouble must have started many years B.C.!

It was about three-thirty when I decided to risk the dog thieves and make shift to get something in the nature of a belated lunch. I had one hand on the buffet door knob, when the man from Matts appeared from nowhere and laid a grimy and authoritative hand upon my arm.

"'Ere," he said, "'scuse me, sir, but where was you orf to? Lunch? You mustn't go now, sir—leave it till supper time; they're judgin' your class in five minutes.

'Ere you are," he continued severely, running his finger down the columns of a catalogue, "novices, undergraduates, veterans, that's you, ring forty-two. Right up the far end of the 'all. Take her along to your bench and give 'er a final tittivatin'. *Wot*—no brush? 'Ere's a brush!"

He thrust one into my hand, shaking his head as might a teacher at a small child who had come to school without its spelling book.

Panic had seized the Baratarian avenue. Brushes, combs, and powder-puffs were in feverish requisition. Then we stamped through the surging crowd, and stood at last, ranged fifty strong, around a huge asphalt enclosure, wherein a fierce little man in loud checks provided us with staring number cards which the women pinned on their bosoms and the men stuck in their hats. The inquiry, in a high treble, of a small child as to whether the funny little man in the middle of the ring (myself) was the clown, scarcely served to strengthen my *morale*. Under instructions from the man in the draught-board suit, we walked, trotted, and galumphed round that ring, in the sight of many thousands of spectators, as though it had been a sort of nightmare riding school. But no one laughed. They looked as if they were in church, with dogs for hymn-books. The crowd tittered once, when Checks commanded me to run round *separately*. I may mention that I turn the scale at—well, I suppose it is the result of good living and a sedentary occupation. I know I was perspiring freely, and one's wind does not increase with the increasing years. Stardust put the gilded roof upon my embarrassment by turning sulky. He stood like some Army mule upon a shell-swept road when the driver is praying him to advance, and the mule is searching for a bluebottle behind his left ear.

"'Scuse me, sir," said a familiar voice behind me, "this is what 'e wants. Ring shyness, that's 'is trouble. This will make 'im bounce!" And the familiar from Matts crammed a handful of scraps of raw and very sanguinary meat into my side-pocket. Under this stimulus Stardust apparently "bounced" enough to satisfy the judge.

The judge was a brave man; he must have been a V.C. Nothing short of that could have faced some of the doggy ladies there and ordered them to "leave the ring."

I needed little ordering. I rushed back to our pitch in Barataria Avenue, and into my

sister-in-law, come—oh, joy transcendent!—to relieve me of my charge and take back Stardust by a later train. I have never before regarded a squashed felt hat, blue spectacles, and a muddy mackintosh cape as lending peculiar beauty to the female form divine. But as the green hat bobbed to knee level and the damp cape lovingly encircled the wriggling, ecstatic Stardust, I thought a woman had never looked so captivating. Released, gentlemen! Free to hurry through the "Way Out" turnstile,

sensation. I sought the man from Matts, and presently left him in a swooning condition. As a nation we "tip" foolishly, but extravagance is justified at times. Even when I discovered that I had overdone it, and should be forced to hurry clubwards in a third smoker, instead of the taxi I had originally contemplated, my spirits still soared in the starlit, dogless sky. I had but to reach the club and reimburse, and then—a deep chair, a bright fire, and——

"A half-bottle of number forty-seven, William."

Ah—a-a-h!

To travel by train seemed at the time the obvious thing to do. I now realise that I should have walked. She came upon me three yards from the booking office, hat and cloak flying, beautiful but terrifying. Bellona and her dogs of war! She came as on the wings of a whirlwind, as a girl must when she is being hauled along by four gigantic mastiffs, wild with joy to have escaped from the stuffy thralldom of the show. They came upon me, Bellona and her dogs of war, at a bound. Then the dogs of war were foaming round me, and Bellona was on her

knees, with her cloak blown over her head, and her ankles tied together with the four entangled leads. As I desperately strove to sort her out, she poured forth a harrowing story of a train that went in less than ten minutes, and a purse which she had left upon the show bench, and—well, in short, would I hold the dogs a moment whilst she ran back to recover it?

I naturally hoped the girl would find her purse. I hoped this for several minutes. After that I am afraid my faculties were concentrated entirely on myself. The dogs missed Bellona. We began to sidle crab-



"'Sorry, sir,' said the collector politely, 'but, if it's all the same to you. I think the company would prefer a ticket.'"

and back into the world of men! I suppose my primal joy should have been in the fact that my wife's favourite dog had won a championship. Alas, I must confess that quite other emotions made me beam upon the jostling throng, and bless the lady on her knees informing Stardust that he was her "own teeny weeny," or words to that effect.

There are moments in life which really compensate for all the drawbacks of these troublous times. This was one of them. I don't think I ever felt so "good" since I experienced that wonderful "demobbed"

wise—a group of five—in the direction she had taken. There is something irresistibly forceful about a mastiff who is rather bigger than a month-old calf. Remember that there were four such dogs, and you will realise why I did not at once comply with the law's admonition to "control" them.

It was just after the largest of the dogs of war had raised a passing perambulator from the ground, by burrowing underneath it in quest of a banana skin, that the law really lost its temper.

"Can't you keep them dogs under control, sir?" it said severely.

"They aren't my dogs," I said irritably.

"Eh?" said the law sharply. "Well, any'ow"—brightening—"you're in charge of 'em," and began to move towards me. I believe that the law's intent was to penetrate intrepidly to the centre of the magic circle whereof I was the gyrating centre, and "take particulars." Anyhow, it was still manœuvring for an opening when a figure, which I at first wildly hoped might be Bellona, resolved itself into a masculine lady with a couple of Poms, and came within the war dog radius. I did not catch what the smaller of the Poms said to my charges, but it was evidently something highly injurious. As one dog, the terrible quartet forgot its mistress and began to travel Pomwards. The Pom retired, shrieking, under the bookstall. Somebody recently averred that a new paper is published every

time the clock ticks; I can quite believe it. I am not prepared to say precisely what followed. I only know that for the next few minutes the sky seemed to rain popular periodicals. I caught sight of an old gentleman neatly bonneted by some hundred-weight of "light literature"; of a baby in a pram totally snowed under by the midday edition of an evening paper, and a prim nurse in collision with a pile of sporting papers ere I myself sustained a discoloured eye through coming into violent contact with some three-score copies of a popular magazine. I remember rushing madly round the wreckage of the bookstall, kicking my way knee-high through football editions as through autumn leaves. Then the crowd closed in. There is no hiding-place like a crowd. I detest all scenes of violence, and so, unnoticed, quietly disassociated myself from this one. From the safety of the lift I beheld the dogs of war also detaching themselves from the scrimmage—they had sighted the returning Bellona. Then the lift gates closed to, and I descended, feeling like the bad fairy of a pantomime. That was the last of the dog show—almost. There was a faint echo of it at the end of the journey, when, still slightly dazed, I fumbled for my tube ticket.

"Sorry, sir," said the collector politely, "but, if it's all the same to you, I think the company would prefer a ticket."

I had tendered him a piece of raw meat.

THE WIND.

A VOICE of tempest, the wind rears
Against the ship that onward goes—
The ship of steel, that little cares
Whither the wind, or what tide flows,

A slave discarded, the wind leaps
Upon the mill that needs him not
A sail-less mill the miller keeps
That throbs within its dusty plot.

And the wind shouts, and spins the vane,
Or some forgotten windmill's sail,
And drives the cloud above the plain,
And bends the good corn in the dale.

ERIC CHILMAN.



“Aunt Charlotte is dead. She’s left me fifteen hundred pounds—fifteen—hundred—pounds!”

FOUR OF A KIND

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

THE Misses Parker were sisters approaching the age of thirty; two reasonably well-educated, averagely competent, ordinarily good-looking, professedly artistic and claiming-to-be-sensible young ladies, who lived in a top flat in a big block in Chelsea. They had aspirations above their means, and excused the top flat by the view. Alice kept herself—just that—by illustrating little stories in little periodicals. Rosa kept herself—just that—by making fashion sketches.

In theory they were early risers—at any rate, when they had “orders” to execute—so as to make the most of the morning light. In practice they were rarely up when the postman came, but one morning in September practice corresponded with theory. They rose at seven, had breakfast in the little kitchen, washed up the things, and were in the sitting-room, starting their work, at a quarter to eight. Alice was glancing through a manuscript to get the descriptions of the hero and heroine, hoping that they might fit one of the old drawings on hand. Rosa was staring at a blouse on a dress-

maker’s stand: “14s. 11d. Latest Paris model.” The blouse (which her sketch was to advertise) seemed lacking in appeal. She was wondering whether she could show it off by an attractive hat (not in the advertisement!). Then Alice put the manuscript down.

“What would you do if Harry and I fixed it up?” she asked.

“Don’t be a fool,” Rosa said. “You know you can’t afford it.”

“We should have what we both earn now,” Alice claimed, “and he says that two—”

“Oh, yes,” Rosa interrupted scornfully. “I know! It’s no use ostriching your head in the sand, Al. Two *do* cost more than one. You can no more afford it than George and I could . . . If he wants to. He hasn’t actually said so, in so many words. But I’ve always given him to understand that I wouldn’t listen to anything so silly. . . . If you chose to be ass enough to go and marry Harry, I’d be all right. It’s you who would have the pinch.”

“Yes, I suppose so,” Alice agreed. “Still,

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I'm twenty-nine, you know. If I ever *am* going to get married . . . Oh, *I* don't know!" She sighed heavily.

"Well, I'm twenty-eight. Other unmarried people are older; and younger!" She also sighed. "At the rate we're going on, we shall be able to get married at about seventy, and I'm not sure even of that!" There was a silence, till it was broken by the rattle of the letter-box. "That's the post-man! A bill, I suppose. I'll bet you it's from Tape's, or else a circular. I shan't bother to go and get it."

"I'll go," Alice said. She was generally the one who had letters, "Harry" being of a corresponding turn of mind.

She went into the passage and returned with two letters; kept one herself, and handed the other to her sister. They both read. After a few seconds Rosa screamed.

"Al, Al, it's from lawyers! Dacre and Hardy, Tollington House. You know. Where one of your magazines hangs out. Aunt Charlotte is dead. She's left me fifteen hundred pounds—fifteen—hundred—pounds!"

"Fifteen—hundred—pounds!" Alice gasped. "You always were her favourite. Lucky you! Well, now you'll be all right if Harry and I—"

"Oh, Al," Rosa begged, "don't be a fool! You know what I say is right."

"It's easy to be wise for other people," Alice observed. "You be wise for yourself, old dear. You're jolly lucky, Rose. Not that I grudge you, of course—any more than I can't help. . . . I'm going out for half an hour."

"At this time in the morning!" Rosa cried. "Whatever for?"

"Harry has written asking me to meet him on his way to the office," Alice explained. "He's thought of something else that he wants to mention, he says."

"Another argument for two living cheaper than one, I suppose!" Rosa sniffed.

"I suppose so. He's mentioned all the argument there really is a hundred times. He wants to. So do I. I know what you say is true. I'm not a fool, though I may act as one. But we're prepared to be poor and put up with it. Harry and I aren't so cold and calculating as—as some people. *You're* all right now, if you and George want to chance your luckies!"

"He's never said anything definite, you know. He's not a fool."

"No, that's against him! I'd rather have a husband who'd be a bit of a fool over me.

Well, I must be quick. Congratulators, Rose. I'm not envious in a nasty way, you know."

She gave her sister a hasty kiss, blinking a little as she did so, and went out. A minute later the outer door slammed.

"Poor old Al!" Rosa muttered to herself. "If she will be such an ass, I shall furnish a flat for them. A hundred and fifty might do it. That would leave fourteen—no, thirteen—fifty—for anything else. I suppose we *shall* now. . . . I almost wish now that George had said something more definite before this happened. You don't want to be a fool yourself, but you like a man to be—to an extent—to the extent that you are concerned!"

There was a ring at the front door.

"Who the deuce is that?" she wondered.

She went to the door, peeped through the glass from the side of the curtain, and saw George. She opened the door rapidly.

"Good gracious!" she cried. "At this time in the morning! Whatever has happened? Has someone given you tickets for something, or what?"

"Only an idea," he said. "I say, Rosa, I—er—the fact is, I saw Al meet Harry Temple at the corner of the Square just now, and . . . Well, they looked rather as if they'd fixed it up."

"That's what struck me when she went out," Rosa owned, "and that she's an idiot!"

"Ah! What struck me was that they'd shown more pluck than we had, and—can't I say the rest inside the door?"

"Don't be a fool, George," Rosa said; "but you can come in, if you like! . . . Oh, how dare you!"

She rubbed a pink cheek, but she did not move away.

"You aren't really cross, are you?" he inquired.

"No-o, not *cross*, but—"

"You will, then? Fix it up like they have, I mean?"

"It looks like it! George I'm so glad you came before you knew what has happened this morning. You'd never guess."

"Got a big order?"

"No."

"One of the swagger houses sent for you?"

"No. You aren't warm even. George, I've had a legacy. It's fifteen hundred pounds. . . ."

"Whew!" He whistled. "Fifteen—hundred!"

"Fifteen hundred! Only fancy! I'm going to furnish a flat out of it for Al and Harry, or they can have this; and we . . . Wasn't it funny that, on this morning of all mornings, you should take the idea into your head like that!"

"Oh, the idea was there all right, long ago. Only you were always so jolly practical about things, don't you know, and I thought. . . . By Jove, I must run for the 'bus. Got to be careful now and keep the right side of people, with two of us to think of. Jolly old two! . . . I must trot, dear. I've to call on the sub of *High Flight* at 9.15, and don't want to be late. Ta-ta, Rosie! We'll invest that legacy, and I'll have to save up as much and get on even terms, so that you can't crow over me, eh? See you at the usual place and time to-night. Ta-ta, 'Mrs. George!' Ha, ha, ha!"

He ran downstairs waving his hand, and Rosa returned to her drawing.

"I shall always be so glad that he was such a donkey as to come like that," she told herself. "It's a jolly old world."

She sang as she worked. "When love is ki-i-i-ind, Constant and troo-oo-oo. . . ."

Alice Parker returned soon after nine, took off her hat and gloves with an air of determination.

"Well," she said, "I've done it! Of course we can't get married for some time, but we're going to call ourselves engaged. *That* was his bright idea. We always trotted about together, he said, so we might as well call it an engagement as not. It would put things on a better footing."

"Well," Rosa said, "if you *will* do it, old dear! Good luck! Harry's all right, so far as that goes. I want to do something for you, out of the legacy. Would you rather that I furnished a flat for you, and kept this for George and me? Or let you and Harry have this, and George and I get a new one?"

"Aren't you rather anticipating, Rose?" Alice said. "You've always told me that George hadn't said anything definite, and—"

"He hadn't," Rosa interrupted, "but now he has! He called in just after you went, and he—er—you know what I mean!"

"Rosa!" Alice screamed. "Not proposed? Don't say that George came here this morning and proposed to you?"

"Well, he did. Why not?"

"Your legacy—"

"Don't be nasty and suspicious, Alice!"

Rosa cried indignantly. "I hadn't breathed a word of the legacy when he asked me. And I am going to marry him."

"Don't be a fool!" Alice cried. "A man who'll rush off and propose to a woman—when he's been jolly careful not to do it for two years!—the moment he hears that she has come into a little money—"

"What!" Rosa screamed. "You told him! He only said that he saw you, not that you'd spoken."

"I didn't, Rose. He didn't hear from me. But it's plain enough that he had heard!"

"What the dev—I shall swear in a minute!—why are you being such a cat? It's only your nasty, suspicious mind. How could he have heard? And how could you know that he had, if he had? Just tell me that."

"Well, I am not one of those who are ready to think ill of people, Rosa. You must know that. But yesterday, when I went into Tollington House—the lawyer's address, remember—to take those sketches to *The Home Miscellany*, George was just coming out. If you recollect, I told you."

Rosa sat down with a bump. "He mightn't have been to the lawyers'," she protested feebly. "Besides, they wouldn't tell him. Why should they? Lawyers are ever so close."

"Rosie, my dear," Alice begged, "*don't* be a—don't humbug yourself. I put it to you. Was it like George Mason to come here and propose at half-past eight in the morning, on a sudden impulse, after he's been friendly with you for about three and a half years and carefully kept from anything binding; when, I suppose, he was seeing you this evening, anyhow? Why was he in such a sudden hurry to make sure of you? What would *anybody* think, after putting two and two together? Isn't it obvious that he knows someone in the lawyers' office, and heard about you? What do you feel about it yourself? I'm the last person in the world to be uncharitable, but—what do *you* think?"

Rosa nodded, bit her lips, blinked a little.

"He's going to *High Flight*," she said, "at 9.15. I shall ring him up there, and say . . . Alice! I know what I'll say. I'll tell him that the legacy is a mistake, that they've 'phoned to me that a later will has been found, and there's nothing for me! . . . Ah, ah! Then my gentleman will be in a fine stew, wondering how he's going to get out of it. Got me and no money! The

mercenary brute! . . . I shan't go to meet him this evening. . . . Would *you*?"

"Most certainly not!" Alice cried, with decision. "You must never deign to speak to him again. I *did* think better of George Mason. But you never know people. The mean, money-grubbing, poor-spirited wretch!"

"The beast!" cried Rosa. "The *beast*! Why, only the night before the night before last—no, the one before that. It was after we saw the film about the millionaire—he was saying that money was only a servant, not a master. He said——"

"Never mind him," Alice advised.

"I don't," Rosa stated. "It is a lucky escape for me. I ought to be very glad that I've found him out in time. I am glad, of course. Only, you get rather—rather used to people. . . ."

She pulled her pocket-handkerchief out of its bag.

"Don't cry, Rosie!" her sister begged. "Don't cry! He isn't worth it!"

"That's just what I'm crying about," Rosa explained. "But I shan't cry when

I talk to him on the 'phone. You shall hear me. I shall make out that I am glad to be saved from making a fool of myself. I am, of course, but . . . I don't want your handkerchief. I'm not crying. . . . Give it to me for a minute. . . . Now I'm all right. . . . He ought to be there by now. I shall try."

She telephoned to the office of *High Flight*, with her sister standing at her elbow.

"I understand that Mr. Mason is calling to see the sub-editor. Can I speak to him on very urgent and important business? . . . Yes, urgent, *and* important. . . . Yes. Mr. Mason, not the sub-editor. . . . Miss Rosa Parker. He'll know the name. . . . Thank you. I'll hold on. . . . Rosa Parker speaking. . . . George, it's all a mistake about the legacy. They've found a later will, and there's nothing for me. . . . Not so sorry as I am, though. Still, my sorrow is tempered. . . . Why, it stops me making a fool of myself, and you! . . . Oh, what's the use of talking. . . . Yes, I do mean it's off. . . . I said off. Off, off, off! Good-bye!"



"They arrived at the flat at about half-past ten."

She banged the receiver on the hook.

"He had the impudence," she observed, "to make out that I only accepted him because I had the money and wanted a husband to go with it! At least, that's what he seemed to be beginning to say when I cut him off. . . . I could tell he was very savage and upset. . . . Some day I'll take good care to let him know that I *had* the money. . . . Alice, I think men are the meanest creatures in the world. I hate them!"

"So do I," Alice agreed, "except Harry, of course."



"They found George Mason sitting on the staircase outside, smoking a cigarette . . . He had a truculent look."

Rosa Parker did not go to meet George Mason at the usual place that evening; met her sister and her sister's Harry instead, and stood them a little dinner out of her legacy. Then they went to a cinema. After that Harry took them home. They arrived at the flat at about half-past ten. They found George Mason sitting on the staircase outside, smoking a cigarette. There was a great litter of cigarette ends around him. He had a truculent look.

"I've been here, off and on, since about a quarter to seven," he growled, "and I'm going to have it out with Rosa. I'm entitled to that. I don't know if she's told you, but she engaged herself to me at 8.35 this morning. At 9.15 she 'phoned and said it was off. She gave me no reason, and——"

"No reason!" Rosa cried. "Why, I said that I'd lost the legacy that you were going to marry me for!"

"Don't be a fool," he growled. "You know jolly well that I wasn't marrying you for that. If I were, do you suppose I'd come and sit on these infernal stairs for hours, looking like a blinking idiot. Well, I suppose I *am*, to bother about you! Anyhow, I've been waiting to have it out with you, when I know you haven't got the money! If you didn't always twist things round in your silly little head, you'd remember that we fixed it up before I knew of the confounded legacy."

"But," Rosa gasped, "but Alice said——"

"Eh?" He turned sharply on the elder sister.

"What were you doing at Tollington House yesterday?" she demanded.

"Tollington House? Yesterday? Talking to *The Home Miscellany* about a new serial. We didn't strike a final bargain about it, but—— However, that doesn't matter. None of you feel concerned about my affairs now. Rosa used to be. . . . What about Tollington House?"

"It is the office of the lawyers," Alice said meaningly. "The lawyers who are—what do you call it, Harry?"

"Administering the old lady's will," Harry explained.

George gave a roar.

"What the—who the . . . You mean to say you thought I'd heard about your legacy, Rosa? You thought that was why I came and—and made an idiot of myself? Well, I wish you were a man! Then I'd know what to say to you. I suppose you think you're above me now? If you think that, well and good. But to put it on me! I've stuck to you for three and a half blessed years when you hadn't a penny. Why do you think I did that? Why——"

"Oh, George!" Rosa began.

"Don't 'Oh, George' me!" he raved. "I don't want you to have me for condescension! And throw your money in my face. I—I didn't think you looked on me as a—a money-hunting swab, Rosie—I mean Miss Parker. . . . I—I can't trust myself to talk. Good night!"

He turned and stalked down the stairs. Rosa rushed after him, clung to his arm.

"George," she cried. "George, dear, don't be a fool! . . . Don't you see, if I hadn't wanted you to want me *for myself*, I shouldn't have been so upset about it."

"Of course, she wouldn't," Alice urged over the banisters. "It was all my fault. I——"

Harry caught her by the arm. "Here," he said. "Come inside and leave them to it. Rosa will manage him all right!"

She did—almost made him feel that he was the one to blame for the misunderstanding.

"Really," she said, when she had finished her apologies, "I don't say it was your fault, George, but you see it did look strange. It *wasn't* like you to come in the way you did this morning, and you have such *funny* ideas about things. So I never quite know *what* strange line you'll take. You won't give me up because I *have* got the legacy, will you?"

"Don't be a fool!" George said.

He grinned so broadly, however, that the remark sounded quite friendly, and Rosa grinned, too.

"It's no use telling people not to be what they are," she said resignedly. "I don't really care if I am, so long as you own you're one, too!"





THE LONGER WAY.

PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER: Of course you write shorthand?
 APPLICANT: Oh, yes, sir, but it takes me longer.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

A STICKY BUSINESS.

By Leopold Spero.

HE was determined to have done with it, and so he sat down and wrote her a postcard.

We all know the wisdom of writing post-cards and letters of this kind and then tearing them up. The writing relieves one's feelings; the subsequent disposal ensures that the hasty action will bring no regrets for that which a better wisdom of second thoughts would have discountenanced. This was why he took a postcard quickly out of the writing-desk—how they stuck, to be sure, those post-war post-cards!—scribbled her name and address on the front, and his message on the back, and then hurried out to the pillar box. He knew that if he did not hurry out he would begin to get second thoughts, and think of giving her another chance, and his resolution would ooze out of his pen. What did he write to her? Well, ought one to say?

You see, it was an outrageous case. There had been a certain amount of coolness, due to a tendency in her towards unpunctuality, which his orderly mind abhorred. She had promised repentance, and the idea was to seal future agreement with a dinner and a show. She

had arranged, both in conversation and by letter, to come up from the Home Counties and meet him at the Willow Tree Restaurant. And, of course, she had not turned up. He waited an hour and spent two-and-sixpence in telephoning to all possible acquaintances, worried the manager with inquiries and instructions—all to no purpose. She had not turned up, the tickets were wasted, and his sister would have the laugh of him. She was sure to know. So he went home fuming, sat down in his little study, and wrote the following message—

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself. You have no sense of responsibility, and I am absolutely fed up with you. I thought you were better than any other woman, and you're worse than most."

There, it's come out! It was such a very silly postcard that I'd intended not publishing it to the world. But now you know all about it, and can see for yourself what a very silly postcard it was. Naturally, he thought it extremely clever and smart. He said to himself:

"She won't like that. She won't like to see that I am determined not to put up with any more of her nonsense. And I suppose she'll

get offended. But the thing is to put one's foot down early. It will come in useful later on, when we do get married."

This point in his reflections brought him to the pillar box. And now he was off again, he was not so pleased about it. He began to wonder whether he could not recall the wording of it, and thought, perhaps, that it might have been put differently. When he got back to his study, he was met by the maid, who told him that Miss Edith had sent her in to borrow some correspondence cards and envelopes, if he did not mind. But he did mind, as a matter of fact. His sister Edith ought to have known by now that one of the cardinal axioms in their housekeeping arrangement was that she was not to come messing about in his study, upsetting his papers. In all probability she had sent Alice in quickly to pinch the notepaper

himself—so ashamed that he went to bed and tried to go to sleep and forget about it. But he could not forget. It worried him all night. It got him up early in the morning, and down for breakfast before his sister appeared, much to the surprise of Alice. It did more. It directed his steps to the post office, where he sent a wire to the firm, excusing himself on account of influenza in a mild form, and then it sent him to the railway station. He felt that he must explain, that he must tell her that he had done this thing in a moment of folly and hasty spleen. He must ask her forgiveness.

Yet as he stood on the threshold of her door he did wonder very seriously whether she would receive him at all. She had been wrong in the first instance, but somehow he could not buoy himself up with this reflection. He had

Sir Digby Buncombe.



HAPPY HOLIDAY MEMORIES OF AN AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER.

The one Tom took of us all, with Sir Digby Buncombe.

directly she heard the door slam and saw him run off to the pillar box.

He sat down at his desk, and there before him was the sheet of blotting paper he had used. It was a new sheet, and he took it out of the pad and held it up to the looking glass, and there read the words he had written as clearly as if he had them on paper before him. He did not like the look of them a bit. He put the blotting paper back, sat down, and lit his pipe, and tried to pretend that he was glad he had sent the postcard off. But why had he sent a postcard? Sheer spite! It was awfully bad form. Goodness knows who would see it. He had only signed it with his initials, so that she would know who it was from and they would not; but it was rotten bad form. He began to regret having sent it at all, and went and had another look at it in the glass. This time it made him thoroughly ashamed of

played into her hands. Whatever she said and whatever she did, there would be an excuse for her—and none for him!

The maid came to the door, and as he gave his name, the Girl herself came out. Her eyes were sparkling, her cheeks were flushed. She greeted him with an exclamation of delight, dragged him into the drawing-room, and kissed him.

"What a dear thing you are!" she said. "I knew you'd understand that something was wrong. Of course, it all happened at the last moment. Mother was laid up, and I couldn't leave her for Town. I tried to ring you half a dozen times, and I sent you a wire, which I suppose you didn't get. But I got your postcard."

The deuce she had! She seemed very pleased about it, anyway.

Then she kissed him again.



Ethel's jolly friend at our hotel.



May and George the day they became engaged.



Everybody loves this of Auntie and Babs



Can't quite remember what it was, but awfully amusing, anyway.

HAPPY HOLIDAY MEMORIES OF AN AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER.

"You are a dear," she said again. "Of course, when you found I didn't turn up, your thoughts must have been beyond expression. Were they?"

Very puzzled, he admitted that they were.

"Well," she said, "I think you chose the cleverest, most tactful way of letting me know it. I really think it *was* clever, sending me just a postcard with the address and nothing on the back. It's a good thing I know your

handwriting, or I should have been puzzled to know who it was from. It was just a blank question. Your silent protest, eh?"

"Have you got the postcard?" he asked.

She brought it. It was quite true. The address was the one he had written the night before, but there was nothing on the back at all. He began to smile to himself. Then he grew severe in his manner.

"The tickets were wasted, you know," he said. "I did manage to square the manager at the Willow Tree about the dinner, but the tickets were wasted."

"You give them to me. I'll get them changed."

"You can't do that."

"Alice brought it in when I sent her to borrow——"

"You're always borrowing my things," he said. "The best thing you can do is to buy me some more notepaper and envelopes, so that you can borrow them when you are short. And at the same time you can buy a packet of decent postcards that don't stick."



AN American scientist calculates that it would take two centuries to boil water by the heat of the stars. For those desiring a quick shave this method is never likely to become really popular.



WHICH?

GOLFER: I did this hole in three last week.

CADDIE (wearily): Three what, sir? Hours?

"Never mind. You stay to lunch, and that'll make up for it. Don't you think so?"

He thought so.

When he came in to dinner that night, his sister said to him:

"Is this yours?"

She handed him a postcard with no address or stamp on it, but on the back there was the message he had written, and thought he had sent.

"You shouldn't leave things lying about like that," she said. "I don't know what it means, but it looks funny. Have you been trying to write a novel or something?"

"You mind your own business," he said. "Anyway, what do you mean by pinching notepaper and postcards from my desk? I've told you not to do it. How did you get hold of this?"

MR. GILKINS is a bright and well-preserved old gentleman, but to his little granddaughter Grace he seems very old indeed.

She had been sitting on his knee, looking at him seriously when she asked: "Grandpa, were you in the Ark?"

"Why, no, my dear!" gasped her astonished grandparent.

Grace's eyes grew large and round with astonishment. "Then why weren't you drowned?" she asked.



WIFE: Oh, Albert, the refrigerator is full of ants!

HUSBAND: Fine! Now we can have the joys of a picnic at home.

THE BLESSINGS OF BROADCASTING.

One result of the wireless craze is that a great hush has fallen upon suburban families, and many neighbour-annoying noises have entirely ceased.

Once we made an awful row, but we seldom do it now;

The gramophone has ceased to make a din;
We never ping and pong, or lift our voice in song,
For we're always listening, listening, listening-in.

Now we never dance a bit, and as quiet as mice we sit;

We biffed Aunt Jane because she dropped a pin.
Father's put his clubs away, and at bridge we never play,

For all the family's listening, listening-in.

HELP IN VOLUMES.

By Howard F. Clark.

"WHAT are we going to do with the blessed things?" asked Mr. Henry Harvey of his wife.

The blessings in question—six ponderous volumes with covers of an aggressive violet shade—reposed upon the piano.

"It was very kind of Aunt Emma to send me such a nice birthday present, I'm sure," he went on, "but a box of good cigars might have been more acceptable than those 'Valuable Violet Volumes,' as well as taking up less room."

"Those books tell how to do everybody and everything, don't they?" returned Mrs. Harvey.



A QUEST.

"Is the boss in?"

"No, mate, he's out."

"Will he be in after lunch?"

"Why, that's what 'e's gone out after!"

This rage for wireless waves quite a lot of worry saves,

For Mother the spring-cleaning won't begin;
Mabel's given up her knitting, and now her fiancé's quitting
Because she's always listening, listening-in.

When the wave is rather long and the current extra strong,

We hear the mark keep falling in Berlin;
But the doctor's in the place, as we've all caught
"broadcast face"

Through listening, listening, listening, listening-in.

R. H. Roberts.

"I gathered as much from Aunt's most instructive letter."

"Then I expect they give instructions for making a set of bookshelves, don't they? Anyway, I shall be glad to get them off that piano. They've been there for a week now."

As a result of this advice, Mr. Harvey spent a laborious time that evening constructing a set of shelves, during which process he used tools and language normally strange to him.

To his wife's recommendation that he should peruse the chapter in the volumes on "Wool, and How to Keep it on," he turned a deaf ear. By supper-time he had finished a remarkable

piece of work, and before retiring for the night the new piece of furniture was stood on a little table near the sideboard.

That the shelves were conscious of the great honour (and weight) put upon them was apparent from the wobbling which ensued as soon as the volumes were placed upon them.

Henry stood back to admire them.

"Mind that loose floor-board," warned his wife, "or you will have the lot down!"

Some hours later the amateur joiner was startled from his dreams by a great crash which came from below. He quickly sat up in bed, a proceeding promptly followed by Mrs. Harvey.

"What was that?" she gasped.

"The 'Violet Volumes' violently vacating the vertical," replied Henry, and, pleased with this effort, he settled himself to resume his broken slumbers.

But Mrs. Harvey had different ideas, and eventually, mumbling imprecations against the books, shelves, and the world at large, Henry left the warm bed, flung on a dressing-gown, and reluctantly made his way downstairs to investigate.

Switching on the light in the dining-room, he saw that the new shelves had proved unequal to their task, and had collapsed. The six volumes and their home lay on the floor in an untidy heap.

He crossed the room and commenced to pick up the debris.

Suddenly he gave a quiet whistle as a small electric torch came to view from amongst the books.

Staighting his back with an effort—for it ached after his unaccustomed labours of the evening—he looked round, and noticed the curtains before the French windows bellying inwards.

Rapidly crossing to them, he flung them aside, to find the windows wide open. The light streaming out on to a flower-bed revealed a newly-made footprint.

"Burglars!" muttered Mr. Harvey.

A quick look round the room assured him that nothing had been taken. Then a slow smile spread over his face.

"What a good job I didn't mend that floor-board!" he mused. "And who says the Violet Volumes are no good? Three cheers for Aunt Emma!"

Meanwhile, at a safe distance from the

house, a seedy-looking individual was tenderly caressing a lump on his head, what time he made remarks about those Violet Volumes which the publishers would hardly care to use as a testimonial.



A good many men have the same feeling with regard to public office as that of a certain distinguished Frenchman toward the Academy—that group of forty who are called "The Immortals."

He was asked one day why he did not wish to be a candidate for the Academy.

"Ah," said he, "if I applied and were



WELL ON THE WAY.

ARTIST: I painted that on my way home from the East.
CANDID FRIEND: It certainly looks as if you were "going west" when you did it!

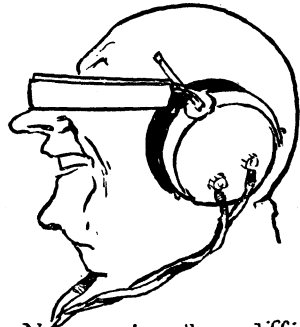
admitted, someone might ask, 'Why is he in it?' and I would much rather hear it asked, 'Why isn't he in it?'"



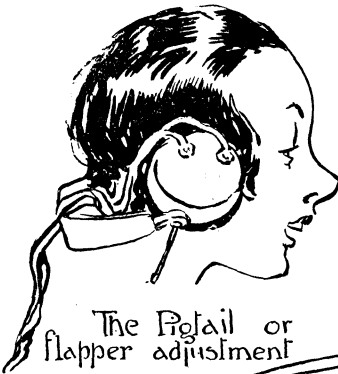
A MEDICAL journal reports the case of a man who could not tell when he was singing and when talking. We ourselves have come across several instances of people who have thought they were singing when they were only making a noise like a door with neglected hinges.



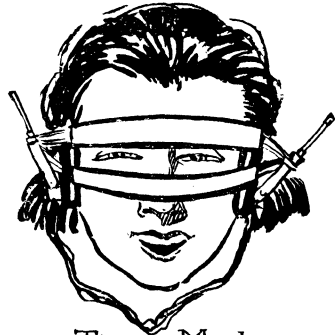
The Chin-strap.- does not
ruffle the hair



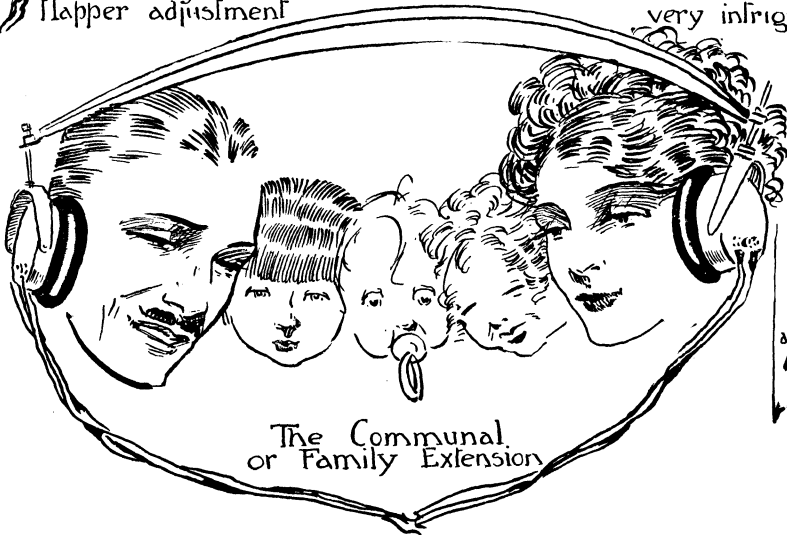
The Nose-rest -rather difficult



The Pigtail or
flapper adjustment



The Mask
very intriguing



The Communal
or Family Extension

done
by
le.

A SINGLE ENTRY.

(Card indexes, according to a daily paper, form part of the equipment of a modern kitchen. They are used for recording recipes, household hints, and "the likes and dislikes of those who are expected to be frequent visitors.")

When Mabel's rich uncle was due for a visit,
We hoped he would come back again and again,
An' I bought a card index to tell us what is it
That uncle's so fond of or treats with disdain.
His favourite drink and his favourite dishes
Were there to be entered by way of a guide,
Together with hints upon filleting fishes,
And how a potato is fried.

The index remains, and is frequently quoted
When household enigmas have got to be cleared,
But the section that we had so fondly devoted
To uncle has long, long ago disappeared.

FINIS.

HER footsteps dragged a little as she came into the room. Tossing her gloves on the table with a weary gesture, she sank into a chair and stared before her moodily.

Her life was over.

She had known what was going to happen directly she set eyes on that red-haired chit! The little minx! How dared she?

Rising to her feet, the unhappy woman stared at her reflection in the mirror.

She was not bad-looking, she thought fiercely. Perhaps a course of beauty treatment—but no, it was hopeless. She might as well face facts. Her day was over, her illusions shattered by a red-haired flapper who had murmured in tones of honeyed sweetness:

"Take my seat. I don't mind standing I'm young."



MORE WONDERS FROM EGYPT.

OLD CLUBMAN: Of course you went up the Nile?

NEWLY-RICH MEMBER: By Jove, yes. I remember that well, because when we got to the summit my hat blew off!

For, though we provided each thing he suggested,
He's never returned for a dinner or tea;
He had catholic likes, but the thing he detested
Unluckily proved to be Me.

Theta.



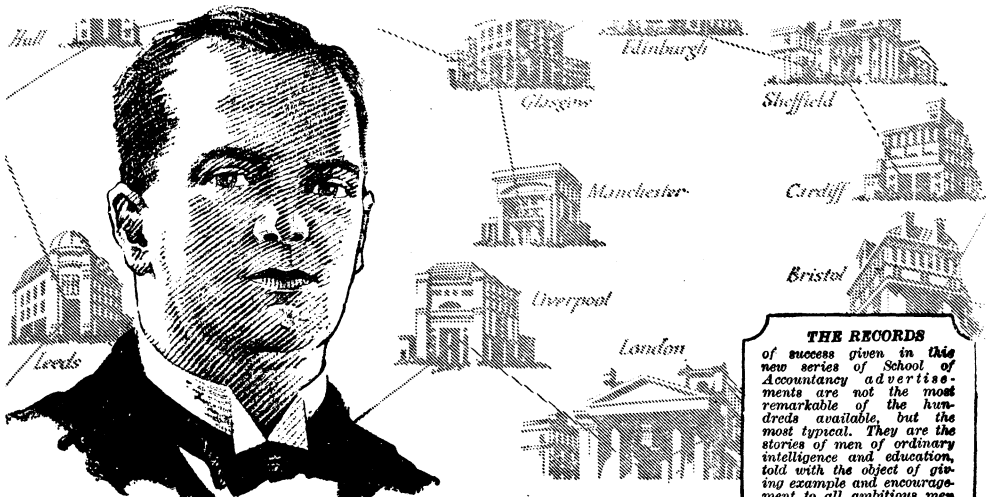
A MICROBE has been discovered which converts hops into motor-spirit. Meanwhile the search for a microbe which will turn ginger-beer into champagne still continues.

LADY (in wrong department): Have you Dickens's "Cricket on the Hearth"?

SALESMAN: No, madam, but I can show you a very good table-tennis set.



THE strains of the bagpipes are said to have cured a man of rheumatism. They probably proved what doctors call a counter-irritant.



HE PLANNED THE BOOK-KEEPING SYSTEM FOR 15 BRANCHES

THE STORY of many an ambitious man may be summarised as a fight against circumstance.

Jarvis found himself a shop-assistant. He disliked the work, held violent opinions about the pay, and despised the prospects. Eventually he rebelled.

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To-day, Jarvis earns in one month a salary that represents a year's pay in his old job as shop-assistant.

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This guarantee assures a student that neither the fee he pays nor the effort he makes will be wasted. Six to twelve months is the average time taken by The School's postal students to complete their courses, upon an approximate basis of three hours' study on three evenings per week. But there is no fixed time limit, and no extra fee is payable, whatever the period occupied by the training.

★ ★ **The number of passes gained by students of The School of Accountancy in the Nineteen-twenty-two Professional and Commercial Examinations was 1,634. This is a higher number than has been gained by any other similar Educational Institution.**

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The School's method of postal tuition is comparable in its efficiency with any oral method. At no point is it automatic. It recognises that no two men are alike in every need. Each student is treated as an individual and receives enthusiastic, stimulating and helpful service. His personal difficulties are fairly met; his weakness is carefully corrected; his particular aptitude is discovered and developed to the utmost advantage.

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AND AT EDINBURGH, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, CARDIFF, AND BRISTOL.

CAN YOU ?

You have a famous cook, 'tis true,
Your *ménage* is the best,
You are a splendid hostess, too,
And such an ideal guest.
But can you eat of humble pie
A truly generous slice
Without one soft, regretful sigh,
As if it tasted nice ?

You're lithe and young as anything,
You're quite a sport at hockey,
And you alone on deck can sing
When winds and seas are "rocky" ;

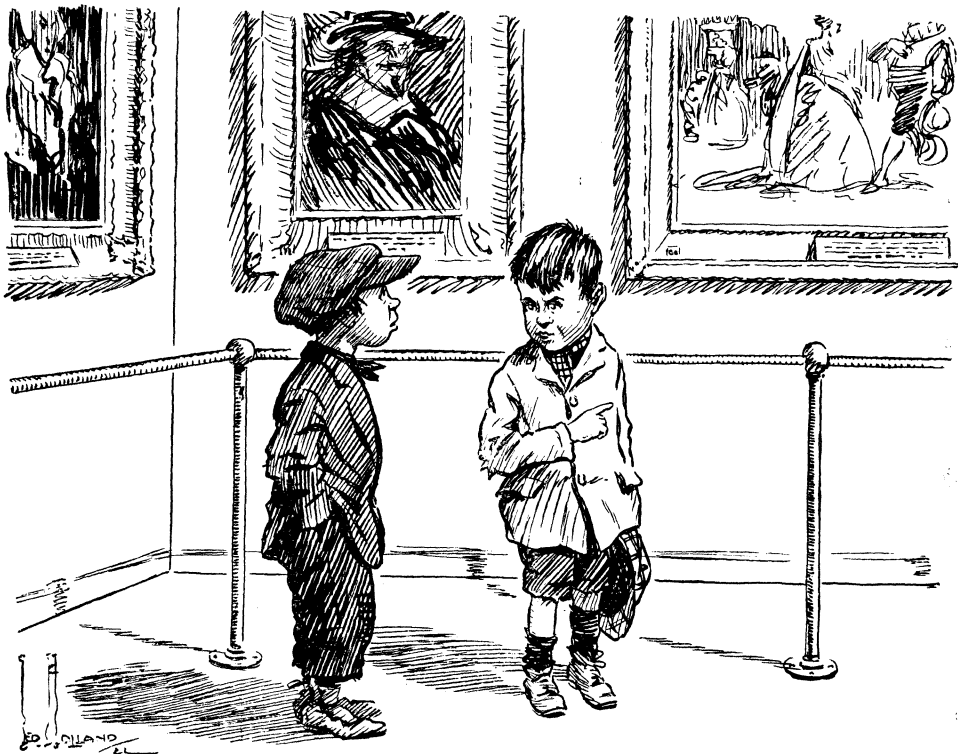
THE VALUE OF ART.

A CERTAIN newspaper was not making sufficient money, so it was decided to cut expenses. A special writer and two reporters were dismissed, and most of the other *employés* became nervous about their jobs. There was one man, however, who exhibited not the least signs of uneasiness. He worked in what was called the art department, for the journal published a great many pictures.

One day he was asked: "Are you not afraid of losing your job ?"

"Oh, no," said he ; "they can't fire me."

"Why not ? They are cutting all along the line. Why do you feel so safe ?"



NO JOKE.

"CAN you read, Billy ?"

"No, not very well."

"Nor can I. Let's 'op it ! We can't tell wot the jokes are underneaf the pictures."

You mount the highest horse in town
With ease that's good to see,
But, say, can you do "climbing down"
With real agility ?

You can from any instrument
Draw music sweet and clear.
Like Orpheus, 'tis your gay intent
To soothe and charm the ear.
Harp, viol, 'cello—all of these
Your servants ! Let me see,
Can you play second fiddle, please,
And make a melody ?

Fay Inchfawn,

Author of "Home's Verses of a Home-Lover."

"I figure it this way: The paper cannot afford to make a cut in its art department. We have so many subscribers who cannot read."



To wear boots containing pieces of garlic is being recommended as a cure for whooping-cough. This leaves us wondering what you have to put in your hat to cure corns.



"Was that recipe for floor-polish I gave you a success ?"

"Oh, yes, dear—everybody falls down immediately on entering the hall."

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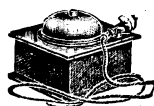
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THE HANDS.

HOME at last! Jove, it was great to know that a pretty wife, a rattling good dinner, and a roaring fire were waiting for one! Well worth that rotten journey in the Tube.

He'd creep in quietly to surprise her. Shutting the door gently, he stood in the hall and listened. Strains of music were coming from the drawing-room. She was playing the piano. The air floated out to him—an air of almost unearthly sweetness. He didn't remember having heard it before.

Turning the handle with infinite care, he opened the drawing-room door a couple of inches and peeped in. The thing he saw rooted him to the spot in horror.

In the softly-lighted room he could see a

"I was a fool to lift that jumper out of the dye with my hands, instead of using the copper-stick," she murmured. "Goodness knows how long it'll take to get it all off!"

M. D.



A CHANGE OF COLOUR.

Wine-colour velvet is to be the popular shade for ladies' costumes.

Yes, Phyllis, I am bound to state
The dresses you have worn of late
Were coloured very sadly;
The ones for walking out and games
Had such unpleasant, earthy names,
A change was needed badly.

The costume that was built of "rust,"
And coat and skirt composed of "dust,"
Depressed me, as I've hinted;



PUTTING IT BALDLY.

THE COLONEL: Yes, my dear lady, when I realised what I had done, I blushed up to the roots of my—er—um—eyebrows!

pair of hands moving over the piano keys—a pair of bright green hands! He gazed at them fascinated, fearful of what he might see did his eyes fall on the figure of their owner.

Trembling like a leaf, he shut the door and ran down the hall, sobbing with the horror of it. His shaking hands sought the front-door handle. He dragged it open and, with a wild shriek, fled into the night.

* * * * *

In the drawing-room his wife glanced at the clock impatiently.

"How late he is!" she murmured.

Strolling to the mirror, she adjusted a stray lock of hair. Her glance fell on her hands as she did so. She smiled amusedly.

Facing Thira Cover.]

I trust I shall not see again
A thing which really caused me pain—
That jumper "putty" tinted.

"Bath brick" and "mud" and "mouldy cheese,"

And other colours such as these,
Should never be invented;
But now you drape your form divine
In ruby velvet like the wine,
I'm perfectly contented.



"Yes," said the artist, "my picture 'An April Shower' caused a great sensation at the exhibition. An old lady, as soon as she saw it, rushed to the door and asked the attendant to give her back her umbrella!"

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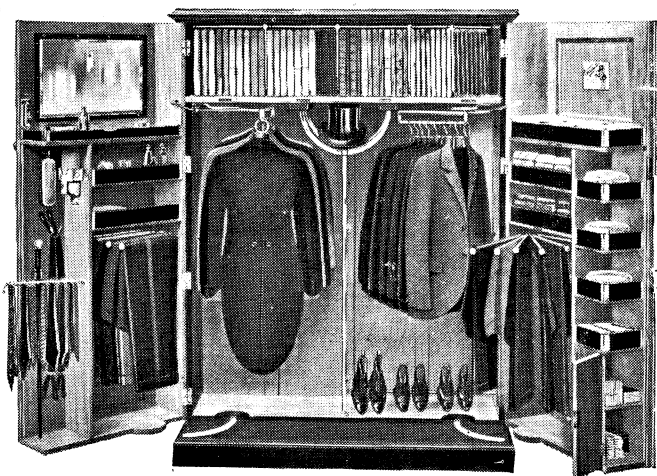
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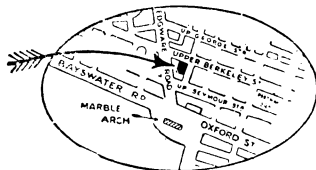
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IN THE STILL DAYS OF AUTUMN. BY E. W. WAITE.

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“‘Please may I see over the house?’ said Spring. ‘It—it belongs to my husband.’”

THE GROOM OF THE CHAMBERS

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of “*Valerie French*,” “*Berry and Co.*,” “*Jonah and Co.*,” “*Anthony Lyveden*,”
“*The Brother of Daphne*,” etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

WILLOUGHBY GRAY BAGOT, gentleman, sat back in his chair.

From where he was, he could look conveniently out of the broad windows, across the shadowy lawns, and on to the stately timber of the sheltered park. He did so, thoughtfully, tapping his teeth with

his pen. Presently he frowned and, leaning forward, set a sheet of notepaper before him and proceeded to write.

Dear Sirs,

I believe your advice to be good.

I will therefore accept Mr. Harp's offer and sell him Chancery—park, residence and

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furniture, as it stands, for forty-five thousand pounds, on one condition.

The condition is this.

The purchaser shall take into his service an individual whom I will indicate, to perform the duties of Groom of the Chambers at Chancery, at a wage of fifty pounds a year. This man shall receive no board, but shall be permitted to occupy the lodge at the West gate of the park, rent-free. So long as he behaves himself and faithfully discharges his office, Mr. Harp shall retain him in his service.

I appreciate that this is an unusual request, but the man knows the house and its contents as I know them myself and is deeply attached to them. The service he will give will be worth having.

*Yours faithfully,
Willoughby Gray Bagot.*

*Messrs. Matthew & Scarlet,
Solicitors,
Serjeant's Inn,
London, E.C.*

Bagot read over his letter with tightened lips. Then he copied it carefully and, slipping the original into an envelope, sealed, stamped and addressed this forthwith. As he turned it about, the crest on the back caught his eye—a rose in a mailed fist. For a moment he stared at it: then he turned and glanced at the same emblem cut in the stone of the aged mantelpiece. . . .

Presently he sighed.

“*Sic transit*,” he said shortly, and, clapping a hat on his head, rose and passed out of the room.

It was true.

The glory was passing. Very soon it would have passed.

There had been a Gray Bagot at Chancery since Harry Plantagenet's day. In fact, that terrible king had given a Bagot the estate in return for valour. That it was not his to give is beside the point. Men took what they could get in those days, as they do now. And now Mr. Albert Harp was taking Chancery.

Like the original Bagot, Mr. Harp owed his good fortune to his prowess in time of War. But, while Gray Bagot had won Chancery at the cost of an eye, an arm and a slash on the thigh, which only the bone stopped, Mr. Harp's succession was due to a judicious administration of his business, which was that of a purveyor of pork.

Sic transit. . . .

Willoughby had done what he could. But

when he came back from the War, things were in evil case.

A cold rain of demands beat upon his diminished income; the stream of outgoings was like to burst its banks: over all, the cloud of a heavy mortgage, once no bigger than a man's hand, was blotting out the heaven.

Of his passionate love for Chancery, Willoughby took his capital and gambled upon the Exchange. The franc was bound to appreciate. . . .

Mr. Harp's offer was a bad one, as offers go. Chancery was a show place. Charles the First had stayed there, and Cromwell, too. The latter had crossed the body of a Gray Bagot to gain admittance. Some of Chancery's furniture had stood in the same corners for more than three hundred years. The library had been collected by a Bagot in the reign of Queen Anne. Mr. Harp's offer was absurd. Still . . . Offers were hard to come by, nowadays. Mr. Harp's was the first that had been made in seven months.

When all that had to be paid had been discharged, of the forty-five thousand there would remain five thousand pounds. This, safely invested, would bring in two hundred a year. And a man could live on that—even one who had been a Captain in His Majesty's Household Brigade.

Sic transit. . . .

Willoughby posted his letter and then walked round the park and in by the Western gate. He passed about the lodge, marking its bulwarks. After a final look, he turned slowly away.

“What a thought,” he said. “Two hundred and fifty a year and rent-free. If it comes off, I shall be on *panne velvet*.”

* * * * *

Two months had gone by, and Mr. and Mrs. Harp were beginning to grow accustomed to the thrilling reflection that Chancery was theirs. Their possession of the place was peaceful; their enjoyment of it, quiet. But their unconcealed delight in their acquisition was almost childish. For days together they never went outside the gates. . . . After a week or two of private revelry in their surroundings, they pressed invitations upon a pack of friends and relatives, whose company they did not desire, because their pride of ownership simply had to be served. This was clamouring for the meat and drink of stares and ejaculations and bated breath. Their precious toy had to be admired. As for the Groom of the

Chambers, not to advertise their employment of such a paragon would have been tantamount to suppressing the Kohinoor. He was the light of their eyes.

They had, of course, no idea that John Worcester, tall, quiet, respectful, constantly about the reception rooms, dusting, ordering, cleaning, polishing this old bureau, rehanging that picture, was Willoughby Gray Bagot.

There was no reason why they should have perceived the masquerade. They certainly recognised that Worcester was no ordinary servant, but the mystery stifled curiosity, as mysteries may. One never could tell. Revelation might cost them his service, and—the best was good enough for them. They had never set eyes upon the vendor before the sale, and Willoughby had spread it abroad that he was bound for New Zealand. At the lodge he lived quietly enough, his only servant being an old groom who kept his own counsel. In the village, two miles away, he had been scarcely known by sight. Such letters as he received went first to a Bank, where they were redirected to 'Mr. Worcester.' Captain Bagot had covered his tracks.

It must be admitted that the Harps' estimate was just. Willoughby gave their home a care which money cannot buy, and themselves a service which they had never dreamed of. He was the last word.

So far as the other servants were concerned, Mr. Worcester and all his works were naturally regarded with a profound disgust. This was not expressed, mainly because the staff profited so handsomely by his labour. But the scorn and indignation which his faithful maintenance of the reception rooms provoked, were largely responsible for the concord which ruled the Servants' Hall.

It was, indeed, as much the unpleasant personality of the butler as the virtues of the Groom of the Chambers that in June determined his patrons to attempt an important change. In a few days their guests would arrive. If only they could induce Worcester to take the butler's place, they would be spared the humiliation of being treated like dirt before their visitors, while their star servitor, instead of flitting in the back-ground, would be agreeably conspicuous.

They approached him delicately, without success. The Groom of the Chambers was respectful, but resolute. He declined the offer gently, but definitely and without hesitation. Then he excused himself and

withdrew to continue his revision of the library's catalogue.

As the door closed—

"'Ell," said Mr. Harp, subjecting his nose to violence.

"Me too," said his wife, miserably. "I'd set me 'eart on that, I 'ad. 'E'd look so lovely in a dress-soot, too, An' now. . ."

A fat tear of disappointment made its appearance and, after poising for an instant upon the brow of her cheek, fell heavily into the broad valley of her lap.

Mr. Harp rose to the occasion and crossed to her side.

"There, there, me dear," he said kindly, "don' take on. We can't 'ave everything. Bowler's very tryin', in course, but——"

"I 'ate the brute," sobbed his wife. "Anyone would. Nasty, 'ulking wretch. Laughin' and sneerin' at us 'cos we ain't gentry; and takin' our money and food, 'and over fist. An' hall the rest as bad, and that impudent, no one would never believe. An' the honly one wot is hones' and respec'ful as good as in 'idin'—goes out o' the room when we comes in, comes in when we goes out, 'ides. . . It's too crool, 'Arp, and that's the truth. Worcester's a walkin' treat. 'E puts a thousan' pound on the 'ouse—easy. An' 'alf the blighters comin' 'll never know 'e's 'ere."

"I'll see they know," said Mr. Harp, violently. "I'll fix that. Besides, they'll 'appen acrost 'im in the course of 'is dooties—boun' to."

"'Snot the same," cried his wife. "You know it ain't. We're buryin' a talent, we are. Other folk 'as fine 'ouses, but there ain't a mansion in London wot's got a servant like 'im. 'E tones the whole show up. We ain't stylish, and as for Bowler and the rest of them rotten sneaks, they'd let a doss-'ouse down: but Worcester's a peach. . . An' we're *buryin' 'im*."

Her husband stamped to the window and regarded his smiling acres with a dismal stare. Mrs. Harp had a knack of reciting unpleasant facts with a pitiless clarity which paralysed consolation.

Presently he took a cigar from his waistcoat-pocket and, after savaging the butt, thrust his quarry reflectively between his teeth. As he felt for a match, the idea flashed into his mind.

Trembling with excitement, he snatched the cigar from his lips, and swung round, mouthing—

"Jane, I've got it! Got it in one, I 'ave! Oh, lovely! Listen 'ere. Worcester's

Groom of the Chambers, ain't he? Good. 'E shall 'ave a show as'll beat the regtime band—e, an' the 'ouse and us, the 'ole year round. 'Old me, someone: I'm that excited and wrought, I can't talk straight. Listen 'ere. Chancery's a show place, ain't it? Figures in the 'istories and guides—used to be shown, once. Well, *we'll show it again—throw it open to visitors daily, from two to four.* The visitors won' worry us—I'll love to see 'em. *An' Worcester 'll show 'em round. . . .*"

With a seraphic smile, Mrs. Harp got upon her feet and began to dance. . . .

A few days later it was announced that, by the direction of the owner, Chancery, one of the most exquisite examples of a mediæval manor-house, had been thrown open to the public and could be visited until further notice any week-day between the hours of two and four o'clock.

* * * * *

The four Americans passed slowly round the broad, flagged walk and, turning a corner of the house, found themselves once more before the main doorway. Their tour of the apartments had lasted half an hour.

One of the men took out a note-case, but the girl touched his arm and shook her head. "No, no," she whispered.

The man hesitated, pointing to the back of their guide.

"Put it away," said the girl, shortly.

Her squire obeyed, staring.

Willoughby Bagot turned.

The moment he always dreaded had arrived.

He was about to be offered payment which he could not in decency refuse.

He always gave his tips to the butler and was thought a prize fool for his pains, but his patrons could not know that.

"That is all that is shown, madam."

The two women inclined their heads.

"Thank you very much," said the elder, pleasantly. "We've enjoyed it immensely."

Willoughby bowed.

For a reason which they could never satisfactorily explain, the two male visitors raised their hats, and the party turned towards the car, which was glittering before the lodge, two furlongs away.

Willoughby felt very grateful. . . .

From a window he watched the quartette making their way along the avenue. He had liked them, and they had made his task easy. Besides, throughout the tour, he had been used as a gentleman.

The girl, especially, seemed to have understood. He was faintly surprised that she had not added her thanks to those of her—her aunt, probably.

Suddenly the former turned and came pelting back.

The men, who were walking ahead, did not observe her movement. Her elderly companion proceeded more leisurely.

Willoughby left the window and returned to the door.

As she arrived, he opened this readily.

"I think I've left my bag in one of the chambers. I fancy I put it down in the picture-gallery."

Willoughby led her to the staircase and she passed up. He followed pleasedly, marking her as she went.

She was tall and slight, and moved with an easy grace. The slim, bare hand, resting upon the banisters, was small and firm and shapely. Its trim nails shone. Her straight back, the even poise of her head, her beautiful ankles, would have delighted a sculptor. Her plain tussore dress and pert little hat suited her perfectly. As for her white silk stockings. . . .

At the top of the staircase my lady turned to the right.

"I know my way, you see," she flashed, over her shoulder.

Willoughby smiled.

Her face was glowing. Its fine colour and the big brown eyes, the small nose and the proud curve of the lips reminded the man of a picture he once had seen. As for her friendliness, little wonder that it entered into his soul.

The bag lay in an alcove—a little, delicate business of powder-blue and gold. Its beads were so fine, they might have been stitches of silk.

The girl picked it up and turned to the man.

"I left this here on purpose," she said quietly. "I wanted to speak to you when the others were gone. You don't remember me, but I met you in Philadelphia, before the War. I had my hair down, then. Why are you doing this?"

"I was staying with the Stacks," said Bagot, knitting his brows.

"That's right. In 1914. But I tell you, my hair was down, so you wouldn't remember. Besides . . . What are you doing here? You were in the Blues."

"That's over," said Willoughby, slowly. "Now, I'm in service. This was my home."

"This?"

He nodded.

"I lost my money, you see, and the place had to go. They're very nice people, luckily. They've no idea who I am, and—and it serves my turn. I live at the second lodge."

"How can you bear it?" said the girl.

"Easily enough," said Bagot, simply. "I couldn't let the place down."

"You speak as if it were a friend."

"It's been my people's home for nearly eight hundred years."

The girl turned to the door.

"You're faithful," she said.

Willoughby shrugged his shoulders.

"Time ties up the affections," he said. Then, "I'm so glad you came back. If I were still the owner, I should ask you to tea."

"And, if I was not a companion, I should accept," Willoughby stared. "As it is, my mistress 'll light into me for being so long. You see," she continued, smiling, "we're fellow bondsmen." She put out a little hand. "And now good-bye. I think she likes this part, and, if I can persuade her to stay at Holy Brush, I'll call at your lodge one evening and ask for some tea. You're a Bagot, of course."

"I was," corrected Willoughby. "But that—that's over, like the rest. I'm known as Worcester now."

"And I," said the girl, quickly, "am known as Spring. No 'Miss,' or anything. Just Spring."

Before he could answer, she was at the head of the stairs.

As he opened the great front-door—

"Good-bye, Spring," said Willoughby.

My lady flung him a bewitching smile.

"Good-bye, Captain Bagot. D'you think you'll know me next time?"

"Yes," said Willoughby. "Even if you have your hair down."

He watched her rejoin her companions, triumphantly waving her bag.

"The Stacks had a daughter," he murmured. "But she used to wear blue glasses because of her sight. Besides, you don't find paid companions worth seven million pounds."

This was quite true. Moreover, his memory was at fault. Mr. and Mrs. Stack had died childless. The whole of their fortune had been left to a beloved niece.

It was natural enough that for the next ten days the Groom of the Chambers at Chancery should reconstruct Spring's visit with a grateful heart. Her precious figure preceded him up the stairs, set a slight knee

on this settle, stooped to observe those volumes: her laughter rang in the gallery, her voice fluted in the hall, her smile flashed in that doorway: her sympathy, grace, charm were lighting his memory with a glow which he found very valuable. In a word, the lady had wrought havoc. She had shown Willoughby Bagot something from which, for the last lean years, he had rigidly averted his gaze—the loneliness of his existence. With her little, firm hands she had rammed the truth down his throat. Had her mouth been less scarlet, had her throat been less white, her form less beautiful, the light in her eyes less tender, had the maid been less startlingly attractive in word and look and deed, it might have gone less hard with the Groom of the Chambers. Bagot could steel his heart with most men. His job was to cherish Chancery, at any cost. It had not been pleasant to play the servant in his own home; at the best, it had been a bitter-sweet business. Still, keeping his eyes upon the ground, he had become used to his monkhood—perceiving many things for which he had come to thank God. And now. . . .

They had walked in Chancery together, he and she, walked and talked familiarly in his own home. It was no more his home, in point of fact, than it was hers. And yet—it might have been his and hers, if she pleased, too, but for ill fortune. That way lay madness, of course. Yet—the place suited her. Chancery was so immemorial that it had become natural: its furniture, tapestries, casements seemed to have grown where they hung: labelling age had stolen upon it, as lichen steals upon old tiles, till the spirit of the artifice that garnished had disappeared, and the house ranked with the oaks Gray Bagot had planted ere Richard was king. And Spring was natural. For all her badges of modernity—bead bag, silk stockings, nail polish, she was as refreshingly natural as Pomona herself. She fitted into Chancery as had no maid or man—except his father—whom Willoughby had ever seen treading those stairs.

When, therefore, some ten days later, the Groom of the Chambers approached his lodge at a quarter to five o'clock of a July afternoon, to see Spring seated upon the turf beneath his window, hatless, smoking a cigarette and talking earnestly with the old groom, he could have burst into song.

Spring picked up her hat and waved, and, when he came up, stretched out her little hands to be helped to her feet.

"I said I should come," she said simply.
 "You shouldn't have asked me."

"If I remember," said Willoughby, "I didn't so far presume."

Spring raised her brown eyes to heaven.

"Which means I've come uninvited?"

Willoughby bowed.

"Queens are not asked for favours," he said. "Yet they bestow them."

"Of course, you're wasted," said Spring,

over the tea I've let you in for."



turning to the miniature porch. "You ought to be in some Embassy, flattering secretive dowagers. You know. Duels of polished wit and sleight of tongue. Never mind. I've got a great idea. I'll tell it you

Bagot put his head on one side.

"Yet she looks generous," he said. "Of course, it's a proud mouth."

"It's a thirsty one," said Spring, passing inside.



"'I know my way, you see,' she flashed, over her shoulder."

Old William served them devotedly, hissing a little with excitement from time to time. He had not waited on a lady for

many a year. Besides, that his master should have company at the lodge delighted his heart. Willoughby's monkhood went against the groom's grain.

"And so," said Bagot, frowning at the weather-beaten cup which the proud mouth was using, "you managed to get to Holy Brush."

Spring nodded.

"Tact," she said. "I ought to be at an Embassy, too. I was most skilful. What I was really up against was that there's only one bathroom at *The Jade*: but I said that that was a custom which was rapidly dying out, and that one day we should be proud to say that we'd used a common bath, just as some people boast of remembering inns where everybody sat around the same big dish, spoon in hand."

"Do they? I mean, shall you?"

"I hope so. Any way, it did the trick, and now she's perfectly delighted. She's bought two gate-tables already, and I left her on the bowling-green, telling the landlord the history of his church."

"I congratulate myself. If only a certain

custom wasn't already dead—that of living and letting live—I'd put myself at your service."

"Which," said Spring thoughtfully, "brings us to my idea. If you want Chancery back, I think you may have it."

"How?"

"Go to America," said Spring. "You had a good time there before."

"I should think I did," said Bagot. "Your people are wonderfully kind."

"Well, go. Don't call yourself Worcester, you know. And use your—your sleight of tongue. With ordinary care you ought to marry an heiress within six months." She paused to take another piece of toast. "It's been done before," she added carelessly.

There was a long silence.

At length—

"I'm afraid I'm a bad business man," said Willoughby, quietly.

"Perhaps," said Spring. "In fact, it's fairly obvious that, commercially, the Gray Bagots weren't in it with the Harps. But why be foolish? You needn't marry the first one that comes along. They're not all Harps, you know. Some of our psalteries are quite passable."

"Would you do a thing like that?"

"I don't know. But then, I'm a fool."

"Exactly," said Willoughby. "So 'm I."

Spring frowned.

"Think," she said. "Think of sitting in your own library, with servants falling over one another to answer the bell, when you rang, and hunters in the stables and four cars, and Royalty coming to stay with you, and money to burn, and 'The Wife of Willoughby Bagot Esquire' the picture of the year, and Chancery smiling in its sleep because a Gray Bagot was up in the saddle again."

"And hatred therewith," said Willoughby, producing a pipe. "Nothing doing, you witch. I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I'm much too foolish. Quite idiotic, in fact. It's hereditary. After all, I've much to be thankful for. At the moment, I'm thankful for your dimple. I suppose it always comes when you're trying not to laugh."

Spring covered her face and shook with merriment.

Presently she sat up soberly.

"We don't do so badly, we servants, do we?" she said. "I guess our respective employers aren't laughing like that. I suppose you won't let me wash up?"

"Certainly not," said Bagot. "That's William's affair."

"Yes, but as often as not he does it with cold water. He told me so just now. And that's all wrong, you know."

"I can't help that," said Bagot, lighting her cigarette. "I like my guests to do as they feel inclined, but there's a limit to my hospitality. And now shall we go outside and sit on the grass? I want to see you against a background of box."

It was a brilliant afternoon, and the shadow of the lodge turned the recess between the grey and green walls into a little arbour, the mouth of which gave on to Chancery, slumbering warm in the sunshine, a quarter of a mile away. What traffic used the road, pounded or whirled about its business behind the close box-screen, alike blind and invisible, but lending the little bay an air of privileged privacy like that of a family pew.

"My summer parlour," said Bagot, ushering his guest.

"Hereafter the Servants' Hall," said Spring, taking her seat upon the turf. "Well, now I'm here, how do I look against the box?"

"You kill the poor thing," said Bagot. "Your eyes are too bright. Never mind. I'll have it watered before you come next time."

"I can't come unasked again. I mean, there's a limit to hospitality, isn't there?"

"You wicked girl," said Willoughby. "You——"

"Why did you want to see me against the box?"

"Because good pictures should be put into good frames. I didn't choose the paper on my sitting-room walls, you know, but I never noticed how very distressing it was until this afternoon."

Spring looked up, smiling.

"Keep something for the heiress," she said.

A car slid out of the distance, crept past the gates and stopped by the side of the hedge, three paces away.

"We're not far off," said a man's voice. "I know this property here, but these cork-screw lanes of yours have tied me up. I can't remember which side the village lies. Maybe there's a porter here. . . ."

A door was opened and someone descended into the road.

Before he could reach the gate, Bagot was out of his garden and in the drive.

"Can I help you, sir?"

As he spoke, he recognised one of the two Americans who had completed Spring's party the week before.

And Spring was sitting in the arbour, with blazing eyes and her under-lip caught in her white teeth, straining her ears. . .

The way to Holy Brush was asked and told.

The motorist re-entered his Rolls and, when this had purred into the distance, Willoughby returned to the arbour with his eyes upon the ground.

The look upon his face told Spring two things.

The first was that Bagot knew what was taking her compatriot to Holy Brush. The second, that he found the knowledge acutely distasteful.

"I must go," she said abruptly, getting upon her feet. "What are you thinking about?"

"I was wishing," said Bagot slowly, "that I was back at Chancery." He looked up suddenly. "And you?"

Spring looked away over the exquisite landscape.

"I was thinking that it's very refreshing to discover another fool."

* * * * *

For the next four days, when Willoughby returned to his lodge, Spring was seated upon the turf, hatless and at her ease, awaiting his coming. The man always assumed that she had just arrived. The assumption was wrong. On the last three days my lady had been there two hours before he came, ironing his washing and delicately mending his clothes. The care of linen was not old William's strong point. She also instructed the groom how to wash up and, shocked by his replies to an examination upon elementary cooking, gave him a written statement of the procedure for roasting meat. Moreover, she taught him to deceive so cunningly, that, when later he volunteered that he had bought an old iron for sixpence and had been trying his hand, his master wholly believed him and praised his discretion. William's ears burned.

On the fifth day, Spring did not come.

When Willoughby, approaching the lodge, could see no sign of the lady, for an instant his heart stood still. Ridiculously enough, he had come to expect to find her beneath his window. Hoping against hope, he quickened his pace. . .

Except for William, setting the table for tea, the lodge was empty.

Willoughby tried to believe that Spring was late. He washed and changed and made a dozen excuses for not taking tea. He gave her half an hour—three quarters, while he smoked in the little garden or strolled in the road. Finally, tea was served at six o'clock. Long after that, he listened to every footfall: not until half past eleven did he retire to rest. And all the time he knew that she was not coming, that he would not see her that day.

Thinking things over in his bed, he became frightened. He would see her again, of course—he hoped, many times. But a day had to come—already it was set in Fate's diary—when he would see her no more, when their idyll would be definitely finished, to be presently bound in Memory and go up to the shelf of Time. The thought shocked him. Till now, he had never realised how pleasant she was. Her company, her ways, had become a necessity to him. Not in four days, of course. That was absurd. Custom is not so rapidly delivered. It was not a question of custom. Spring had become a necessity in half an hour. The gap she filled had been yawning for months and years, but, until it was filled, he never had known it was there. And now he did know, and its emptiness would gape upon him. Could he have quitted the place, changed his way of living, flung himself into some pursuit, had he but gone to her and she not come to him—it would have been different. As it was, so long as he cared for Chancery, dwelt at the lodge, always between five and six he would miss her excellence, turning his lonely parlour into a gallery of dreams.

For Willoughby, there lay her magic. She was his dream-lady. She had come to him as dreams do come. Their instant understanding, their immediate intimacy, their full-grown fellowship—things which should have been impossible and yet were natural as the day—were stuff that dreams are made of. . .

Finding his legend good, he took it further, recklessly. He made her mistress of Chancery, loaded her with presents, taught her to ride. . . The hopelessness of such fantasy did not matter at all, because it was founded on fact—a breathing, sweet-smelling fact, that sat beside him on the turf, all apple-green frock and white silk stocking and tiny tennis-shoes. With her perfume in his nostrils, he could afford to be extravagant—with her perfume in his nostrils. . . And now . .

Sic transit gloria mundi.

My lady's absence was deliberate. Spring was as wise as she was fair. She wished to discover whether Gray Bagot's steady eyes counted with her as much as she thought they did, whether she was losing her head instead of her heart. She was not expecting for an instant to be able to read her own soul, but she was more than hopeful of extracting a valuable hint.

Her hope was realised.

By the time her aunt and she had dined she had become so *distracte* as to provoke that usually imperturbable lady's indignation, while, retiring at ten o'clock, she remained awake for one hour, immersed in the distasteful reflections that Time can in no wise be recalled and that they who fling opportunities in Fortune's face can hardly be surprised if their future relations with the lady are rather strained.

At last, picturing Willoughby, she fell asleep.

Let us use her heavy brown eyes, as the delicate ranks of lashes are closing up.

Tall, spare, soldierly, the descendant of the old Gray Bagot was good to see. His hair was fair and close cut; his complexion, clear and fresh; his nose, aquiline. His mouth was well shaped; his voice, pleasant; his grey eyes, set far apart. It was, indeed, his steady, grey gaze which was so notable. He always looked you in the face and expected to be so regarded. He liked to see, and was perfectly content to be seen. If you did as he expected, you had your reward. His character, his various emotions were spread before you in such print as a child could read. If he liked you, you saw it in his eyes, and there was a friendship made in a second of time. If he disliked you, you saw it, and that was that. But he never disliked anyone without just cause. As a matter of fact, he was generous to a fault. He looked his best, I fancy, upon a horse, but so does many a man. He had a fine, upright carriage, and his shoulders were broad. Honest, unassuming, dignified, he did his blood credit. That Chancery suited him is indisputable: his looks, his bearing, his ways agreed with her: and Chancery was a show place.

Willoughby tried not to hasten upon the sixth afternoon. His working hours were from seven till four o'clock, but, since the measure he gave was always good, he seldom left the apartments till nearer five. To-day, however, there had come no visitors to interrupt his labours, and by a quarter past

four there was no more to be conveniently done.

It follows that he reached the lodge rather before he was expected—in fact, in comfortable time to witness the delivery of a pair of pyjamas, four soft shirts and six handkerchiefs to his valet by his *repasseuse*.

"Hullo," said Spring cheerfully. "I guess you never dreamed I could iron." She turned to the groom, who was standing upon one leg. "That's all to-day, William. The other two need mending, so I'll do them to-morrow."

"Very good, m'm."

With an apologetic look at his master, William made good his escape.

"You will do nothing of the sort," said Willoughby. "If I'd had the faintest idea——"

"Live and let live," said Spring. "It amuses me and it doesn't hurt you, so why deprive a poor servant of her innocent fun?" She slid a cool arm through his. "And now take me into the garden and give me a match. By the time you've changed, William will have brought us some tea."

Willoughby did as he was bid.

It was when the meal was over that Spring put her elbows on the table and knitted her brows.

"I want your advice."

"That's very easy," said Bagot. "Let sleeping suits lie, and Grooms of the Chambers do their own dirty work."

The red lips tightened.

"Thanks very much," said Spring. "Perhaps I ought to have said that the advice I want is upon a matter upon which I value your opinion."

Willoughby considered his finger-nails.

"I've got an awfully good answer to that," he said. "A regular winner."

"What?" suspiciously.

"Can't think of it for the moment," said Willoughby, "but——"

"Oh, but you will before I go. We shan't go before next Friday. In fact, I can't. You see, I only get off in the afternoons, and William says there's a waistcoat——"

"I capitulate," said Willoughby, quietly. "Friday? In three days' time? Is Mrs., er, Mrs——"

"Le Fevre."

"—Le Fevre weary of Holy Brush?"

"Not that I know of," said Spring. "I want your advice."

"Yes?" said Willoughby.

"I have been offered another situation."

"As companion?"

"Yes."

Bagot took out tobacco and started to fill a pipe.

"First of all," he said slowly, "are you happy with Mrs. Le Fevre?"

"Very. She's awfully sweet."

"Then I take it the new situation would be an improvement financially?"

"Yes," said Spring, shortly, "it would."

"D'you think that you'd have as much freedom?"

"I know that I shouldn't."

"You might be happier."

"I might," said Spring. "I'm not at all sure: but I might."

Willoughby frowned. Then—

"Might you be less happy, Spring?"

"Easily."

The man slid his pouch into a pocket and rose to his feet.

"My dear," he said, "unless the increase in salary is too big to be ignored, my advice is to stay where you are."

There was a pause.

At length—

"I think I ought to say," said Spring, slowly, "that the offer was made by a man."

Willoughby's heart gave one bound.

For a second he hesitated. Then—

"That alters everything," he said.

"Why?"

"Because companions, like Grooms of the Chambers, do not figure in the table of relative precedence, whereas. . ."

Spring stared out of the window and into the park.

"You've seen him," she said. "Twice. But then you knew that."

Willoughby nodded.

"I should say," he said quietly, "that he was one of the best."

"In fact, if I don't accept, I shall be selling a bed of roses for the second 'o' in smoke?"

Willoughby set his teeth.

"Dear Spring," he said, "I can't advise your heart—only your head. But I'm bound to say that, placed as you are, you should do what your head tells you, if you possibly can. Think of the future."

"I do," said Spring. "That's what worries me so."

"Supposing Mrs. Le Fevre were to die and you to fall sick."

"Supposing my husband treated me like a dog."

"I'm quite sure he wouldn't," said Bagot.

"He wouldn't do it twice," said Spring, sweetly.

"The point is," said Willoughby, swallowing, "that companions can be given notice, but wives can't."

"Wives can't give notice, either."

"I've heard of its being done."

"Then you advise me to take my precious offer and thank my stars."

"How can I? But I can point out that a girl in your present position is up against it. You can't get away from that. Think. You depend for the bread you eat upon somebody else's whim. I bet you've never saved. You haven't had time. And so, you see, it's vital that, if you can improve your position—scramble on to firmer ground, you should. Well, you've got a roaring chance. He's rich, of course, and a white man—two pretty good points, you know. I don't suggest that, if you were not a companion, you couldn't have half London at your feet; but, as it is, my lady, you don't get a show. So that this chance that's come your way may never come by again. If you were rich, I should tell you to please your heart. As it is, you don't dislike him, you've no reason to think he won't do you slap up—I'm perfectly certain he will—and so I simply suggest you should please your head."

"Which do you do?" said Spring.

"I'm a man."

"Exactly, and you jolly well please your heart."

"Not at all," said Bagot, "I——"

"I imagine you could do better than serve the Harps. I mean, you weren't born or bred to fix parlours, but, because you're mad about Chancery, you just do."

This was unanswerable.

After a moment's reflection—

"A male man," said Willoughby, "can shift for himself. If he likes to buy trouble, he can. He can always get through."

"And what," said Spring, ignoring his careful evasion, "what about my suggestion that you should marry a wife? You wiped the floor with it. But the instant the position is reversed, I must swallow my feelings and follow my head. What if you are a man? Men aren't immune from sickness. Don't say that you've got William, or I shall scream. If William's as good a nurse as he is a seamstress, you wouldn't live twenty-four hours. And look at the women there are who are up against it. They don't go under because they're not on concrete."

"I don't suggest that you would. But some of the roads of Life are pretty bad."

If one can avoid the roughest, it's—it's just as well. Spares the frame, you know."

"Don't I look strong?"

"You do. I'm sure you're as hard as nails, but nobody's any the better for being hammered."

"And so, although the sun's shining, I'm to dive into the subway of marriage, in case one day it may rain."

"At least there's a station here," said Bagot, doggedly.

"In other words, I mayn't get another chance. Go on. Say it right out. You've been hanging around, trying to hand me the statement for a quarter of an hour."

Willoughby gasped.

"You wicked, ungrateful child." He raised his eyes to heaven. "For sheer, bare-faced perversion, that breaks the tape. Never mind. I'm through, I am. I've done my best and I'm through. As some poetaster has said, 'You can lead a girl to the altar, but you can't make her think.' Or is that out of *Paradise Lost*?"

With that, he seated himself upon the table and felt for a match. He was really ridiculously relieved.

Spring gave a little laugh.

"My dear," she said, with her eyes upon his face, "I was only playing you up. I think your advice is sound and provident, and you've perfectly satisfied me that if I don't take it, I shall be a brass-bound fool."

The punch was unexpected, but, to Bagot's eternal credit, the hand that was holding a flaming match to his pipe never wavered. The man knew how to lose.

As for Spring, she was so proud of him that she had much ado not to burst into tears.

Before she had time, Willoughby had laid down his pipe and picked up her hand.

"That's right," he said, smiling. "For your sake I'm awfully glad and I believe you'll be very happy." He kissed the cool fingers, and turned away. "And, now that's settled, let's go into the Servants' Hall."

He had, to my mind, done well, had this Groom of the Chambers. He was, of course, desperately in love with Spring. More. By taking the office he held, he had made himself outcaste. He never could marry, because he could never allow any woman to forfeit her own degree by becoming his wife. The possibility of finding a woman whom he could love, who also was outcaste, had been too ridiculously remote to be considered. And now this very thing had

come about. Exquisite, dazzling Spring was within his reach. Whether she would have married him is beside the point, which is that he could have wooed her with a clear conscience. Yet, because of her chance of marrying one who was not outcaste, his wonderful, shining occasion must be renounced. . . . Willoughby renounced as he loved—with all his might. The man was resolute. No passing flash of pity must be permitted to affect the case, no tear of sympathy for him fall into the trembling scale. For Spring to suspect that he loved her would have been unearthly sweet. That it would actually embarrass her was most unlikely. What was a broken-down Bagot, haunting the home of his fathers like a seedy ghost—what was such a man to her? Still, the slight risk must not be taken. If she could possibly do it, she must marry her wealthy swain. To Bagot, Spring's happiness was everything. His own did not count.

To my mind, such love was worth having. And Spring thought likewise.

"I must be going," she said.

Willoughby bowed.

In silence they passed through the garden and out into the drive.

As he opened the wicket-gate—

"Tell me one thing," she said. "Why did you say you were sure he was one of the best?"

"Because I knew that, if he was not, you wouldn't have considered his proposal."

"But I didn't," said Spring, with a positively blinding smile. "I turned him down last night."

"You turned him down?" shouted Bagot.

Spring smiled very sweetly.

"I thought I told you," she said, "that I was a fool."

She left him staring, and pelted down the road.

* * * * *

Spring came the next afternoon, but was gone before four o'clock.

Then came Thursday.

Willoughby found her framed in the little porch.

"Change quickly," she said. "I mustn't stay long to-day."

"Packing?" said Willoughby, quietly.

"Yes."

They ate their tea without laughter. The spirit of parting was hovering over the meal.

Afterwards they sat by the window, for,

though the sun was shining, it had rained a lot that morning, and the world was wet.

Spring sat like a child, perched on the deep sill, smoking a cigarette and peering at Chancery out of the leaded panes.

"You will remember it all?" said the Groom of the Chambers.

"Yes—all."

"It's like a tale, don't you think? A slice of a fairy tale. In the distance, the shining castle, and here, on the fringe of its domain, the little cot."

"Where the poor boy dwelt who was really the rightful heir, with one old retainer to whom he was still the lord."

"And one day a Princess came, with hair as dark as night, and eyes that were unfair, they were so big, and—and silk stockings, and all. And she recognised the poor boy (*sic*) and, because she had a nice, soft heart, she came and had tea with him, instead of visiting the castle."

"And the silly part of it was," said Spring, "that she wasn't a Princess at all, but an ordinary, poor girl, who was——"

"She was a Princess," said Bagot. "She hadn't got the riches or the Court she should have had, but—oh, anyone could see she was a Princess."

"Any way, the boy treated her like one, which was very nice for her, and, when the time came for her to go——"

"The boy lost his wits," said Bagot, steadily, "and made a fool of himself." Spring turned and looked at him. "You'll never guess what he did. He forgot that he was no longer lord of the castle. It wasn't altogether his fault, because the presence of the Princess had made his cottage all glorious. Be that as it may, he thought how wonderful it would be if only—the—Princess—didn't—go And when he came to his senses and saw what a madman he'd been, the idea was so precious, that he couldn't get it out of his head. You see, she'd seen what his life was, and she seemed to understand, and she did like Chancery, and he had two hundred a year, as well as his wages, and he could be home by half past four every day, and there was a bathroom upstairs, and——" He stopped short there, and clapped his hands to his temples. Then he burst out tempestuously. "Oh, Spring, darling, why did you ever come to dazzle my wretched eyes? You couldn't stick it, I know. It's absurd, grotesque, comic. The clothes you're wearing are worth more than I earn in a year. I'm mad—raving." He sank his head upon his chest and put

out his hand. "Give me your blessed fingers to kiss before you go, and then—go as you came, my sweet, like a breath of air, like a perfume out of the night. I'll try and think it's been a dream—a wonderful, golden dream, which the good Gods sent me, to make my memory rich. You know. When first you wake, you could weep to think it isn't true; but, after a while, you're grateful for just the dream."

Spring put down her face and kissed his hand.

Then she slid off the sill and put her arms round his neck.

"Why d'you think I came back that day? Why d'you think I left my bag in the gallery? Why d'you think I've come here? Because I love you, Willoughby—loved you before you loved me. I don't care what you've got, or what you haven't. I only want to share your life."

"My wonderful darling," said Bagot, and kissed her mouth.

* * * * *

Miss Consuelo Spring Lindley became Mrs. Willoughby Bagot ere August was old. The wedding took place one morning at Holy Brush and was extremely quiet.

Mr. Worcester obtained one day's leave without arousing suspicion, and the quick congregation consisted of a tearful Mrs. Le Fevre, that lady's solicitor, who gave the bride away, and William, the groom. For the dead I cannot answer, but if polished brass and marble may be believed, eleven Gray Bagots slept through the simple service beneath the cold, white flags.

The following morning, Benedict was back at his work.

This, however, was destined to be disturbed.

Shortly before ten o'clock, his employer summoned him to the library, and bade him close the door.

"Worcester," said Mr. Harp, "I 'ave some very queer noos. In fac', I'm all of a shake—never 'ad such a night in me life, wakin' up all of a sweat and tossin' and tryin' to think, till me brain rebelled against me." He sighed heavily, holding a hand to his head. "As for Mrs. 'Arp, she's that struck and bewildered, she's stayin' in bed."

Willoughby regarded his employer and then fixed his eyes upon the floor.

"Yes, sir?" he said steadily.

"Yesterday afternoon I 'ad an offer for the 'ouse." The Groom of the Chambers started and then went very pale. "Lock, stock and barrel—just as I bought it

meself." Mr. Harp paused as if seeking for appropriate words. Suddenly he smote upon the table and let out a cry. "They might 've offered me twice—free times what I gave and I'd 've 'ad 'em shown out wiv a flea in their ear. Forty-five thousan' I paid, as p'r'aps you know. Well—I can't 'ardly believe it, but *they offered me ten times that.*"

"Four hundred and fifty thousand!"

"Four 'undred and fifty thousan'," said Mr. Harp. He slapped his breast. "I've a bankers' draft in 'ere for a quarter of that—'undred an' twelve thou—five. I 'ave to keep takin' it out to believe it's true."

"You took the offer, sir?" ventured Bagot.

"Why, man alive," screamed his master, "wot else could I do? You can't turn away money like that. You 'aven't the right. I tell you straight, I'm dotty about this place, but 'Business First' 's my motter, an—an' it's pretty nigh 'arf a million," he concluded absently.

For a moment, blinking, he scribbled figures upon the blotting pad, his lips moving, his eyes fixed. Then he sat back in his seat and covered his face.

"Two o'clock they come, and give me till four to decide. Immediate possession, in course. I 'ad to take it or leave it by four o'clock. I never 'ad two such hours in all me life. One thing I said. I asked if the buyer was British, for I couldn't 'ave sold to a foreigner, come wot might. 'Yes,' they says, 'British.' So I signed her away at this table wiv tears in me eyes. I s'pose we'll 'ave free seats now an' do the grand, but shan't be never so 'appy as we've bin 'ere."

There was a long silence.

"When am I to go, sir?" said Bagot.

"I mentioned you," said his master. "I didn't forget. I said as I 'oped you'd stay with me and Mrs. 'Arp, but if you didn't do that, maybe you'd like to stay 'ere. I said you was a Groom in a million an' did the work o' five an' that wot you didn't know about the place could be counted out. The fellow listened and took a note o' your name, but 'e said that he 'ad no authority to promise to take you on. 'Owever, the purchaser's comin' this afternoon at free. You'll show 'im round, in course, and it's Lombard Street to a norange 'e'll jump at the chance. Mrs. 'Arp and me'll be out. There ain't no call for us to stay, an—an' we'd rather not. The deal's to go through nex' Monday at twelve o'clock."

There was nothing more to be said.

Chancery had passed.

* * * * *

Five hours and a half had gone dragging by and Bagot was in the gallery, oiling an aged hinge, and wondering how to word his *communiqué* to Spring.

Suddenly the throb of a bell came to his vigilant ears.

The can went into a locker, and the Groom of the Chambers descended into the hall.

He tried his best to be calm, but his nerves were taut. A good deal depended upon this interview—their tiny home, their living, their . . .

With his hand on the mighty latch, Willoughby moistened his lips. . .

Spring was standing alone on the broad flags, very smartly dressed, looking ridiculously girlish, and inspecting her thin gold ring with her head on one side.

Behind her, in the hot sunshine, was gleaming the grey and silver of a magnificent *coupé*.

Husband and wife regarded each other with beating hearts.

Then—

"Please may I see over the house?" said Spring. "It—it belongs to my husband."

Willoughby put a hand to his head.

"F-four hundred and fifty thousand," he stammered. "Then——"

"Yes, dear," said Spring, entering and closing the door. "We might 've got it for less, but I didn't want to take any risks. You see," she added, setting her back against the oak, "in spite of all your protests, you took my advice. In fact, you married the first one that came along."

Willoughby tried to speak, but no words would come.

Suddenly he began to tremble.

In an instant, Spring's arms were about him and her cheek against his.

"Willoughby, my darling, my darling!"

So she comforted him.

Presently he picked her up as one picks up a baby child.

"I never dreamed," he said slowly. "I never dreamed. . . I didn't know how to tell you, and I was going to ask the people if they could see their way to keep the Groom of the Chambers on." A shy smile came playing into his face. "Do you think you could—madam?"

Gravely, his sweet regarded him.

Then—

"You must ask my husband," she said.

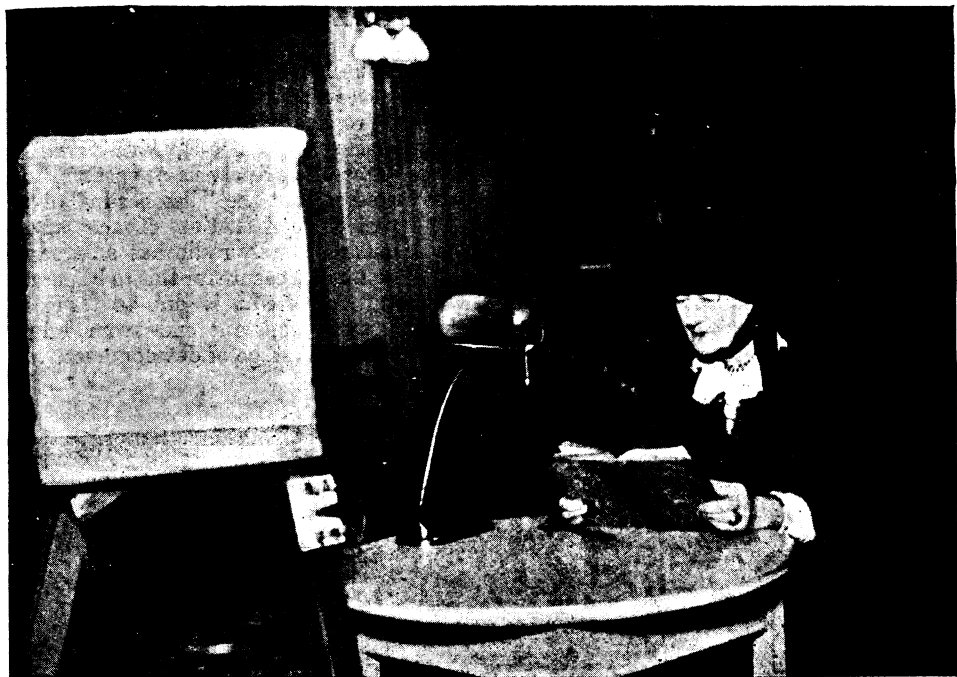


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MISS ELLEN TERRY BROADCASTING THE SCENE FROM SHAKESPEARE'S "KING JOHN" IN WHICH PRINCE ARTHUR IMPLORES HUBERT NOT TO PUT OUT HIS EYES.

BROADCASTING

THE PRESENT POSITION AND THE OUTLOOK

By E. A. B. SNOADEN

ALTHOUGH there has been considerable controversy concerning the general lines upon which broadcasting should be conducted, and the development of this fascinating branch of radio has been hindered by the delay in finding a real solution of the problems which have to be dealt with before the industry can be placed upon a firm basis, it is obvious, even to the most casual observer, that radio is rapidly entering into the daily life of thousands of families in this country. We often hear the question "Will it last?" but those who are in doubt as to the future of broadcasting either have little or no idea of the possibilities which it holds, or are inclined to frown upon every innovation

which makes a strong appeal to the popular imagination and conclude that it is merely a passing craze. On the other hand, we come into contact with the radio enthusiast who declares that radio generally is only in its infancy, and persists in ignoring the real progress which has been made since the year 1896, when Marconi so ably demonstrated the practical application of the great discoveries made by Heinrich Hertz nine years previously. Undoubtedly there will be vast improvements in radio-telegraphic and radio-telephonic apparatus as our engineers gain further experience, but the services which radio is already rendering, and the considerable development work which has made possible such

services, must not be overlooked nor too heavily discounted by a fervent desire to do so much better. Apart from the fact that high-power land stations in Europe can be "read" without difficulty as far away as distant Awarua, N.Z., that ships can be equipped with apparatus capable of maintaining communication at ranges of four thousand to five thousand miles, and of receiving press news sent out by stations more than ten

distortion before they are fed into the aerial system; furthermore, that the electric waves propagated from the aerial at the transmitting station can, with the aid of easily-controlled receiving apparatus, be reconverted so that the "listener-in" obtains perfect reproduction of the voice or music. Surely radio has advanced in no small measure for this to be possible, and full credit is due to those who have by constant endeavour brought us to this stage of development.

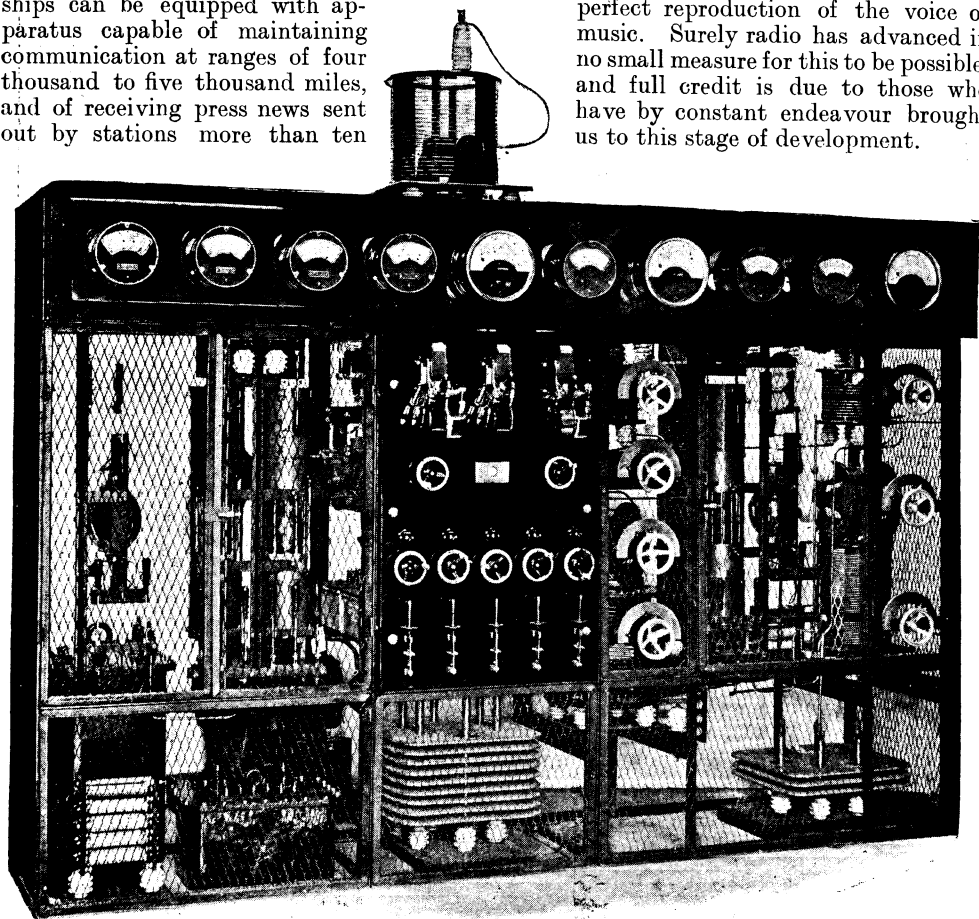


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THE FIVE KW. TRANSMITTER AT THE BRITISH BROADCASTING COMPANY'S MANCHESTER STATION. [The Radio Communication Company.

thousand miles away, that the radio direction finder makes the navigation of ships and aircraft as safe in foggy as in clear weather—apart from these and other remarkable achievements of which we rarely hear, there is the one fact which means everything to broadcasting, viz. that it is possible to construct transmitting apparatus, such as that in use at the Manchester Broadcasting Station, which can convert a multitude of simultaneous sound-waves into electrical ripples and, in twelve successive stages, transform and amplify them without

OUTLINES OF RADIO COMMUNICATION.

Interest in radio technically has now become fairly general, and it may not be altogether out of place here to outline the principles of radio communication before passing to the consideration of details of equipment.

A radio system consists of the generation of high-frequency oscillations in an antenna, or aerial, as it is more commonly known, by means of which energy is radiated, through the medium of the ether, and produces in a distant antenna similar oscillating electric

currents, the presence of which is detected by highly sensitive "receiving" apparatus. The waves so propagated and detected have two components, electric and magnetic, which are at right angles to each other and have equal energies; they must co-exist if the wave is to progress, the cessation of the one involving the stopping of the other.

They must also be in phase, that is to say, the electric and magnetic disturbances must be coincident in position, both being at a maximum and minimum at the same instant, but they do not reach that state until a quarter wave-length distant from the point of emission. Having got into phase, they must, to continue to co-exist, advance with the velocity of light—i.e. at a speed of 186,000 miles a second. The transference of energy may therefore be said to be instantaneous in so far as we are concerned with distances over the earth's surface. When the distance from wave-crest to wave-crest, which is termed the "wave-length," is short, the frequency is obviously greater than is the case when long wave-lengths are employed; the shortest ether waves produce Röntgen or X-rays, and as the length increases we come to actinic rays, then the light rays at frequencies varying from 1,200 billions to some 600 billions a second, next to the frequencies of heat rays, and lastly to those of radio, varying from a few thousand oscillations to a million or so

a second. Each radio station transmits on a particular wave-length, and in some cases uses a particular wave-length for each of the special services it may be operating; certain wave-lengths, or wave bands, are reserved for the different classes of radio working, as, for instance, 300 and 600 metres adopted under the International Convention

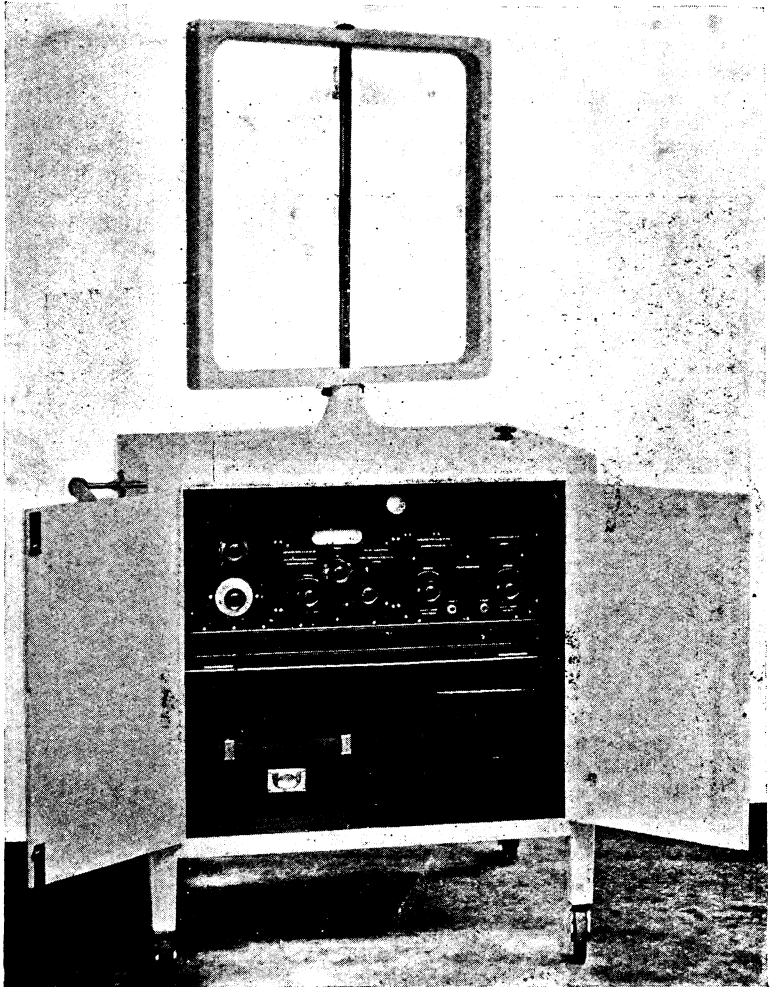


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[The Radio Communication Company.

A SEVEN-VALVE RECEIVER DESIGNED FOR HOSPITAL USE.

The frame aerial mounted above the cabinet is used instead of an outside aerial.

for ship to ship and ship to shore working, and 450 and 800 metres for marine direction finder work. High-power land stations operate on wave-lengths up to nearly 25,000 metres, the reason for the use of these long waves being that although the energy emitted is proportionally greater on the shorter wave-lengths, the long ones can

travel considerable distances without so much loss.

The fact that stations operate on these different wave-lengths, and that receiving apparatus can be adjusted to respond to transmissions on different wave-lengths, is of the greatest importance, for without such facilities radio working, as we know it to-day, would be impossible. By "tuning in" to a particular station we can receive that station and avoid the reception of signals from other stations, unless, of course, we are very close to them and their signals are consequently many times stronger than those we are endeavouring to "tune in";

frequency alternator, and the thermionic valve. The last-mentioned is the system with which we are concerned when dealing with broadcasting, and it is through the invention of the thermionic valve that radio has made such remarkable advances during the past ten years. As will be seen from the photograph, a "valve" is similar to an electric lamp, but in addition to the usual filament there are two other elements within the bulb known as the grid and the plate. This device is used to strengthen or "amplify" and to detect or "rectify" the incoming oscillations, and is also used as an oscillation generator. The functioning

of the valve depends upon the emission of electrons from the heated filament, which pass to the plate

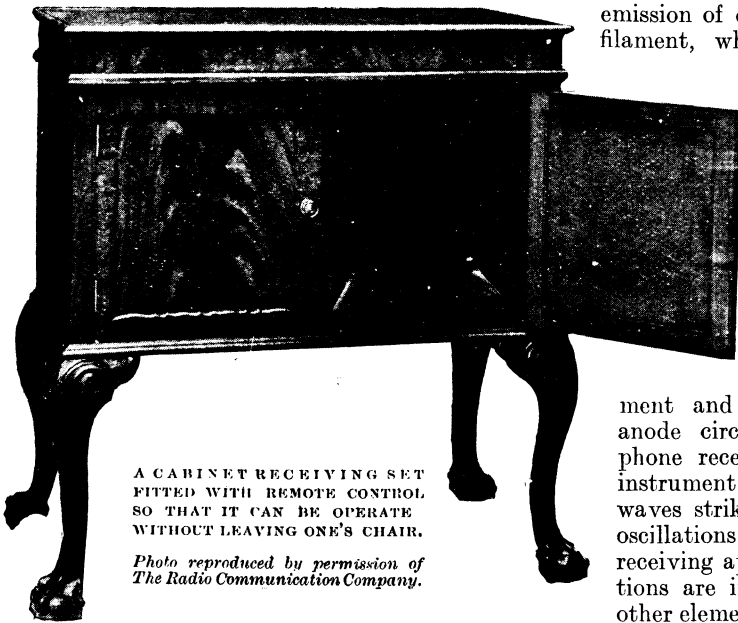
through the grid, which, as its name implies, consists of wire mesh, a perforated plate, or a wire spiral placed around the filament. The "plate" or "anode," to use the more correct term, is made to attract or draw away the liberated electrons, and a current flows between the fila-

ment and plate and around the anode circuit, including the telephone receivers or other recording instrument. When the incoming waves strike an aerial, they set up oscillations in the tuner side of the receiving apparatus. These oscillations are in turn impressed on the other element in the valve—the grid.

As this takes place, the flow of electrons within the valve varies, and consequently the current in the circuit previously mentioned is changed, so that we obtain a reproduction of the current changes in the apparatus at the transmitting stations.

THE BROADCASTING STATION.

In a broadcasting station which employs a radio-telephone transmitter, the current changes are produced initially by the voice or other sound waves actuating the microphone (shown mounted on the stand in the photograph of a broadcasting station studio), the electric ripples from which are conveyed to the transmitter unit situated in a room adjacent to the studio. In the apparatus illustrated on page 602 there are



A CABINET RECEIVING SET
FITTED WITH REMOTE CONTROL
SO THAT IT CAN BE OPERATE
WITHOUT LEAVING ONE'S CHAIR.

*Photo reproduced by permission of
The Radio Communication Company.*

but granted that the receiver is selective—the circuit arrangements being such that we can make it respond strongly to the frequency of the incoming waves, and be disturbed but very feebly by the frequencies of the unwanted transmissions—it will be possible to listen to any station within range at will. The latest receiving sets, such as the one shown on this page, are fitted with direct reading wave-length indicators, so that the operation of "tuning in" is rendered very simple indeed.

Originally the high-frequency oscillations in an aerial were obtained by means of the "Spark" system, which is still employed for ship work and at small stations; but three other systems have been developed in recent years, viz. the arc, the high-

five thermionic valves; these are very much larger than those which we use in receiving apparatus, and are known as "power valves." The bulb of a valve is usually constructed of glass, but in the larger valves fused silica is employed instead of glass, as it possesses no co-efficient of expansion, and consequently is not liable to break on being unevenly heated. Two silica valves, each capable of dissipating $2\frac{1}{2}$ kilowatts at their anodes, are employed in the modulating circuit, and one large silica valve, capable of dealing with five to seven kilowatts, is used in the oscillating circuit. Two smaller glass valves are used in other circuits of the transmitter, one for amplifying the speech or microphone currents, and the other for separately exciting the oscillating valve. With this arrangement the wavelength of the station can be maintained exceedingly constant.

RECEIVERS.

Receiving sets range from the crystal type receiver, which is simplicity itself, and can be operated by the merest novice, to the large cabinet sets consisting of tuner, high-frequency amplifier, detector, and low-frequency amplifiers. In the former the current rectifying properties of certain kinds of crystals are made use of for detecting instead of employing the valves previously described; in the latter several valves are used to amplify the high-frequency oscillations, then to rectify or convert them into low-frequency oscillations, and again to amplify the current before passing it through the sound-reproducing instrument, which, in the case of cabinet sets, takes the form of a "loud speaker."

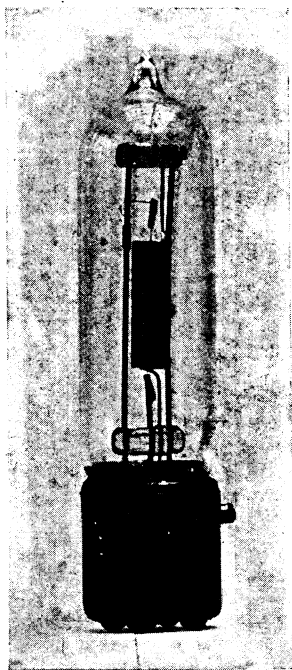
When deciding upon the type of receiver to be used, the two main problems are usually cost and the question of exactly what kind of reception is required, in which connection we have to consider the distances from the transmitting stations and the facilities available for erecting an efficient aerial. Provided a good outside aerial can be erected, a crystal set, with head tele-

phone receivers, would be found quite satisfactory, under normal conditions, for reception within ten miles of a broadcasting station; but for distances beyond this a valve set would be necessary. If the distance is more than twenty-five miles, one or more stages of amplification should be used, and if it is desired that the head telephones be dispensed with, and the speech or music reproduced on a "loud speaker," a receiver having three or more valves will be required to give satisfactory results, unless some measure of "reaction" can be resorted to.

Poor reception is often due to endeavouring to obtain too great a volume of sound instead of aiming at obtaining clearness and purity of tone. For perfect reproduction of speech or music from a distant station it will generally be necessary to employ a receiver having at least one stage of high-frequency amplification and two stages of low-frequency amplification, in addition, of course, to the ordinary detector circuit. In the set illustrated on page 604 seven valves are used, three for high-frequency amplification, one for rectifying, and three on the low-frequency side. Such a set can be relied upon to give excellent results when properly adjusted, the controls being quite simple and easily manipulated after a little practice with the apparatus.

It has been mentioned that the filaments of valves have to be heated in order to release the electrons, which may be considered as millions of small particles of electricity, and this is done by passing a

current through the filament. The current is obtained from an accumulator, the charging of which from time to time often occasions some trouble. Heating the filament in this way is not a very economical process, and the manufacturers of valves have recently introduced a new type which overcomes this trouble. An admixture of thoria with the metal of the filament, or a coating of thorium oxide on its surface, greatly increases the electronic emission, and by this and other processes



A THERMIONIC VALVE.

One of the latest developments in valve construction, facilitating the avoidance of accumulator troubles.

Photo reproduced by permission of The Radio Communication Company.

filaments are produced which will function efficiently at a dull red heat. Very little current is required, and consequently this can be obtained from small dry batteries which are quite inexpensive and last for a long time. The life of a valve mostly depends upon the lasting qualities of the filament, which, like the filament of an electric lamp, burns out after a certain period. The life of these new valves is more than three times that of the ordinary receiver valves; therefore, in addition to the greater convenience in connection with the batteries, we have the further advantage

casting Company, which company receives half the broadcasting licence fees collected by the General Post Office and a tax on apparatus sold by wireless manufacturers which bears the Postmaster-General's approval mark, the letters "B.B.C." arranged within a small circle. The revenue so collected is used to defray the cost of operating the broadcasting services, and as soon as the revenue has been increased, as it undoubtedly will be when proper licensing arrangements are completed, we may expect to see considerable extension of the company's activities, and no doubt much

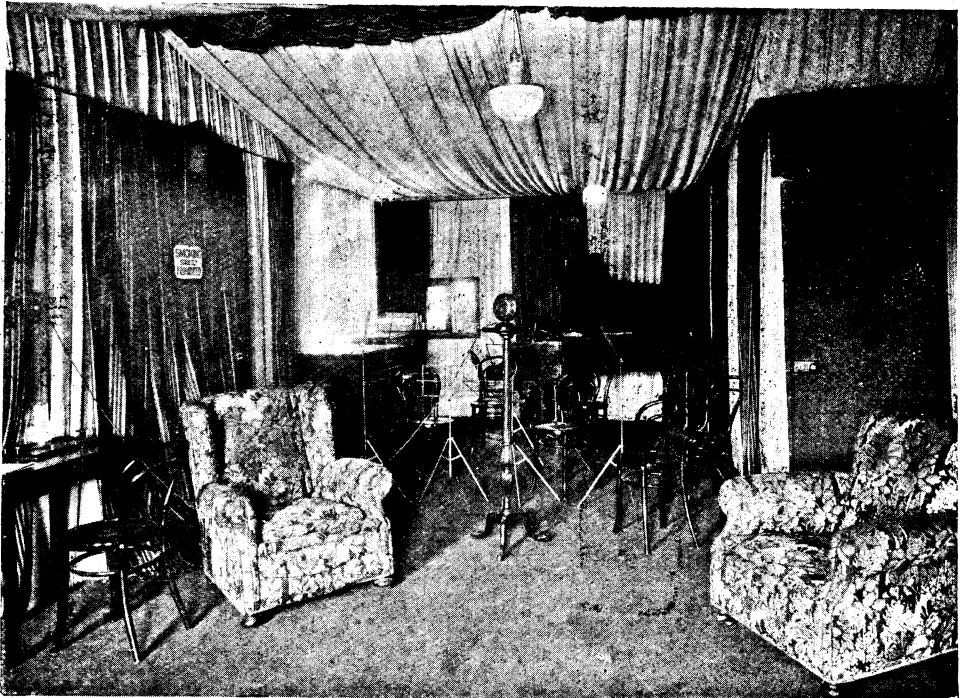


Photo by permission of]

[The British Broadcasting Company.

A BROADCASTING STATION STUDIO.

The ceiling and walls are closely draped to reduce refraction to a minimum.

that the cost of upkeep is much reduced. Other small dry cells are used to raise the anode to a high potential in order that it may attract the electrons emitted by the heated filament. These cells are commonly spoken of as the high-tension battery.

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING COMPANY.

There are at present eight broadcasting stations in this country, and the extension of the system by means of automatic relaying stations is projected. These stations are operated by the British Broad-

improved programmes will be possible. The British Broadcasting Company is often criticised, as it is believed to be a very wealthy corporation having the monopoly of the broadcasting business. This is not the exact state of things, for although several of the largest companies interested in the radio business are amongst its principal shareholders, membership of the company is open to all British radio manufacturers. The object of having this company is, of course, to have one central authority carrying out the broadcasting

service in this country, in order that the state of confusion which has existed in America and other places, where several broadcasting transmissions have been permitted simultaneously without any co-ordination, may not exist in this country, and that a really good service may be given instead of several inferior services. It will be appreciated that the equipment and operation of broadcasting stations are a very expensive business, and for the work to be done well, and the services of highly-paid artists to be obtained, it is obvious that considerable expenditure has to be incurred.

broadcasting programme, and is not concerned with the technical intricacies of the apparatus he is using. There are also those people who, instead of purchasing apparatus approved by the Postmaster-General, have made up sets and received the broadcasting transmission without payment of any licence fee to the Post Office. To be able to build up one's own set it is necessary to hold an experimental licence from the Postmaster-General; but these are granted only in certain cases, and many users of home-made sets, unable to obtain an experimental licence, nevertheless continue to listen in, whilst others, because of these

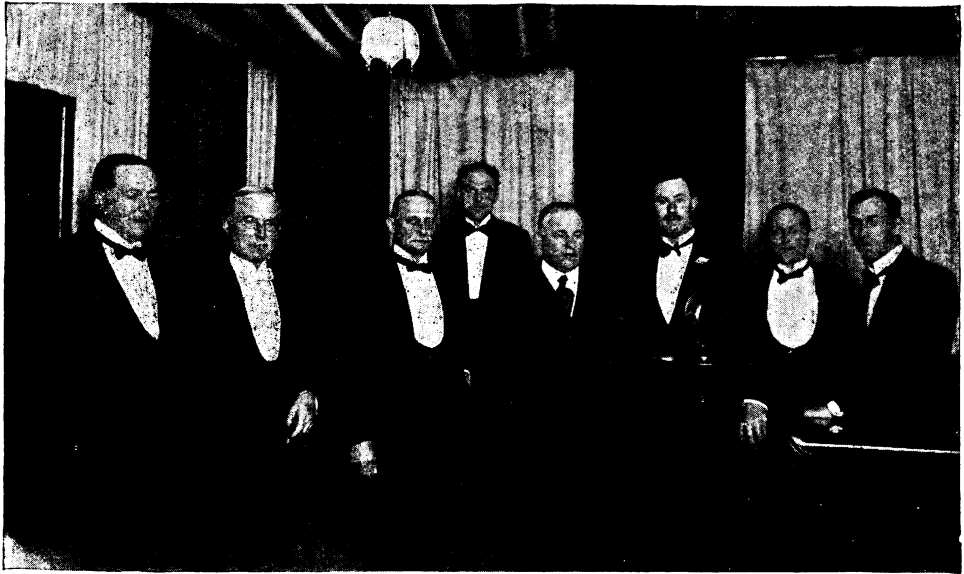
W. W. Burnham. Sir William Noble.

J. W. Reith.

Dan Godfrey, Jr.

A. Burrows.

B. Binyon.



Lord Gainford. Sir Edwin Stockton, M.P.

Photo by permission of

[The British Broadcasting Company.]

LEADING MEN OF THE BROADCASTING WORLD AT THE OPENING OF THE MANCHESTER STATION.

Whether the present method of raising revenue is the correct one is a point which the Committee appointed to advise the Postmaster-General as to the best method of conducting broadcasting will have thoroughly investigated, but the system of collecting a tax on apparatus is undoubtedly one which does not appeal to the public generally, who in these days seem to have a natural aversion for that little word "tax." The users of broadcasting apparatus may be divided into two principal classes, namely, the "experimentalist," or, as he is sometimes called, "the amateur," and the listener-in, who merely desires to be able to receive the

difficulties, have not even applied for one, but have merely gone ahead and purchased components of sets and assembled them in accordance with diagrams given in the manufacturers' catalogues or in the many handbooks dealing with this subject.

The apparatus in a receiving set can be so arranged that the amplified energy in a succeeding circuit can be fed back to a preceding circuit, and by this "reaction" process it is again magnified or strengthened several times. This is a most useful property of receiving circuits when care is exercised in its application. If, however, the apparatus is not properly adjusted, considerable annoyance can be occasioned

to other listeners in the neighbourhood, the receiver under such conditions becoming, in fact, a small transmitter, and setting up oscillations in the aerial. Consequently, howls, whistling, and such-like noises are heard in the midst of the items transmitted from the broadcasting station, and what would otherwise be an enjoyable programme is sometimes rendered useless. The genuine experimentalist, who understands the operation of his apparatus, and respects the feelings of his neighbours, may be relied upon to avoid causing such effects; it is the problem of the user of the home-built set, not conversant with the functioning, that the authorities have to solve. It is expected that at an early date a new form of licence will be available which will provide for the requirements of those who prefer to build up their sets with the easily assembled components now on the market, and new arrangements will be made with the British Broadcasting Company under which they will receive some payment in respect of these home-made sets, probably in the form of a higher proportion of the licence fee. An alternative to this has been suggested, namely, that the public should be quite free to use radio receiving apparatus without the necessity for holding a Post Office licence, and that dealers in radio apparatus should be licensed and made to pay to the Broadcasting Company a percentage of their turnover. Having regard to the fact that the business of these dealers, whether they are selling a length of aerial wire or a hundred-guinea cabinet set, is entirely dependent upon the successful efforts of the Broadcasting Company, it seems only fair that they should render every assistance to the Company in carrying through any scheme which ensures that users of broadcast receiving sets contribute towards the cost of carrying out the service.

Each country seems to be working on an entirely different scheme, and it remains to be seen which will work out best in practice. In Australia, for instance, proposals have been submitted to the Postmaster-General under which that country will be divided up into broadcasting areas, and concessions will be granted to persons within each area to operate a broadcasting station and to appoint dealers within their area to sell sets capable only of receiving the transmission from the concessionaire's particular station. The user of the apparatus would then pay an annual subscription to the concessionaire. This would appear to be restricting the

industry to the confines of everyday entertainment business, and it is very doubtful whether any real interest in broadcasting is likely to be maintained under such conditions, for anyone using a radio set would naturally resent being limited to listening-in to the transmission of the one station in his immediate vicinity if other stations were within range of his receivers.

If as a result of the deliberations of the Advisory Committee, the present unsettled state is definitely remedied, it is safe to say that we shall shortly see broadcasting placed on a much more satisfactory footing in this country, and its scope considerably increased. The Broadcasting Company has already shown what can be accomplished in addition to the ordinary transmissions of concert and other items given in the station studios. The simultaneous broadcasting through all stations of Sir Ernest Rutherford's presidential address to the British Association at Liverpool recently made it possible for people in Glasgow, London, and other cities to hear this eminent scientist's words even before they were heard by the people seated at the back of the hall, and served to emphasise the success which can be attained with modern equipment and sound organisation. The general press news is now broadcasted from London through all the stations simultaneously, and is immediately followed by local press bulletins from each provincial station. Several other developments of the scheme have already been demonstrated to be quite feasible, but no doubt a good deal remains to be done to clear away opposition on the part of those who fear that broadcasting encroaches upon their preserves. When the programmes can be extended, we shall be in the position regularly to hear operas, plays and other performances, important political speeches, lectures, etc., rendered in theatres and halls with which the stations will be connected by cables or landlines. It is easy to conjecture what this will mean to many thousands of people who, for one reason or another, do not find it convenient or are unable to leave their homes to visit the places of entertainment and other public gatherings in the larger cities. One example of the considerable value of broadcasting as a means of entertainment to such people is well indicated by the fact that with the aid of a compact outfit such as that recently presented by Dr. Drysdale to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and illustrated on page 603, the patients

lying in their beds can hear concerts and other performances given many miles away. Furthermore, reception of broadcasting is not limited to listening-in by means of the usual head telephones or the ordinary "loud speaker"—which has yet to be greatly improved before we have a perfect instrument—for in any room in a building or ship equipped with the Hale-Lyle system a person can listen-in by simply placing to the ear a special telephone receiver which is not connected to the receiver instrument, the latter being placed in any convenient part of the building, such as the lounge, in the case of an hotel, or the wireless cabin on a ship. The educational and political value of broadcasting can become very considerable, by bringing into every township the intellectual pleasures of the great cities, whilst it can also be of much use to the farming community in conveying weather and market reports, and in entertaining the workers in the villages, thereby helping to relieve the dreary monotony which drives so many of them into the cities and towns. We may, in fact, look upon the growth of this new industry as an important advance towards closer contact between the homes and the centres of thought and art, and the extent to which it can influence the lives and elevate the ideals of the people in this country and elsewhere cannot be too closely appreciated.

In "The Wireless Weekly" a short time ago Dr. Lee de Forest (the inventor of the three-electrode valve, and one of the foremost American radio pioneers) expressed his views regarding the potentialities of broadcasting as follows:—

"More than the newspaper, more than the postal service, this mighty service of hearing the spoken voice in greeting, the public address, the sermon, the lecture, the musical programme, is actively uniting us in a bond of common fellowship, common acquaintanceship, as no other conceivable instrumentality can accomplish. I predict that as an educational medium the radio telephone broadcast will in time prove second in importance only to the public school. Already we see a closer inter-

linkage between the people of Canada and ourselves due to the broadcasting idea; and soon these benefits will extend to Europe, between the peoples of the Old World, always heretofore strangers, enemies, because strangers and personally unacquainted. When night after night the citizens of foreign lands will hear the friendly words, the music and the songs from across strange frontiers, then gradually will the feelings of enmity and suspicion, based chiefly on distance and ignorance of each other, change to understanding and goodwill. Thus I maintain that radio broadcast, with its irresistible educational influence, is destined to prove one of the most potent powers for abolishing war."

For "broadcast radio" to extend from national to international effectiveness to the degree thus contemplated involves the erection of high-power stations specially for this work; but if such benefits as Dr. de Forest mentions can be secured, the cost would be justified ten-thousandfold. It would be difficult indeed to discover a more practical and lasting memorial to those who have sacrificed their lives in order that a lasting peace might be secured to the world.

Just as this number is going to press, the report of the Broadcasting Committee appointed last April has been issued, simultaneously with a statement by the Postmaster-General. The Committee's recommendations include a number of prospective developments, some of which, even if they are eventually adopted, will not begin to operate until the year 1925, owing to the existing agreement with the British Broadcasting Company, which is to hold good down to the end of next year. The Postmaster-General has, however, made an interim agreement with the British Broadcasting Company of which the provisions most closely bearing upon matters discussed in the foregoing article are the decision to issue a "constructor's licence," which will clear up the position for those listeners-in who have built up their own sets, and a "special interim licence" for the possessors of hitherto unlicensed sets.



THE TREE OF THE RULERS OF MEN

By P. BEAUFOY

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

"EVERYTHING'S rotten!" said Mr. Wisbey to himself. He liked making remarks to himself. He could always find a sympathiser in that way.

Everything had gone quite badly that week. The Saturday afternoon found him depressed, disgruntled with life. His mild request for a small increase of salary had been dismissed by the managerial person as a joke of the most exquisite fibre. His wife had snubbed him more aggressively than usual. The little servant had declined to carry out a single request. Never had Wisbey's five-feet-six of insignificant humanity seemed to him so humble. There was no doubt whatever that he was a failure.

"No luck," he said, again addressing that sympathetic person somewhere inside him. "That's the trouble."

He felt too miserable to go home to Clapham. Impossible to face the depressing atmosphere of Rose Villas in this mood. Perhaps he would go to a tea-shop and fortify himself with strong coffee and muffins. Meantime he wandered quite aimlessly along the streets of Soho, into which he had strayed without any conscious knowledge of the interesting fact.

"Wish I could get some luck!" he muttered to his confidant.

A passer-by collided with Wisbey, urging him to look where he was going. The collision forced the head of Wisbey in the direction of a very grimy shop window. As his eyes took in the general contents of the window, he noticed a word printed in huge scarlet letters on an enormous card—the word "LUCK!"

"That's funny," he reflected. Then he paused and gazed at the amulets, charms, and other paraphernalia of the superstitious

paraded in the shop front. One little tray was marked "Luck-Bringers. Cheap. 1s."

Wisbey paused for a moment. Then he remembered that his weekly salary lay in his pocket. He could not remember that he had ever before indulged in a purchase of a luck-bringer. Perhaps he had been foolish to rely too much on ability and industry. Had not the professor, at the lecture last Monday night, said that there were undoubtedly certain elements in Nature which were not properly understood—elements capable of enormous power?

Wisbey entered the little shop. The instant he was inside he was assailed by some strange but by no means unpleasant odours. The air of the little place was heavy, sleepy. Wisbey suddenly got the notion that something queer, startling, was going to happen to him in that shop. An old, old man, wearing a tasselled cap, was playing with a huge Persian cat.

"How can I serve you, sir?" he inquired in a weary voice.

Wisbey hardly knew what he wanted. He had a vague idea that he could "do with" a goodly portion of the nebulous element called luck, but he wanted something further. He desired to possess more power over those with whom he came in contact. It was disagreeable to feel and know that one was invariably at a disadvantage.

The dealer had a sympathetic, understanding sort of face. Encouraged by this fact, Wisbey suddenly told him something of his affairs, of his way of life, of his everlasting rebuffs.

"I'm not superstitious, you know," he added, with a little flush, "but p'r'aps there is something in magic. I read a book about it the other day at the free library, and if it's all true——"

The dealer nodded. "Some of it is true, no doubt," he said gently, "but there is a great deal of error mingled with the truth. About yourself, now—it is possible that a leaf from the Tree of the Rulers of Men might help you to accomplish something. I have a few leaves left, I believe."

He rummaged in a drawer. From that drawer he extracted very slowly an alabaster box. A faint, peculiar smell rose from the box. With loving fingers he took from it a triangular-shaped leaf.

"There is a tree in Burmah, the original seed of which was commonly supposed to have been planted by the great deity Siva," he explained. "A few of the leaves have come to me. The legend goes that when Siva planted the tree, he told his disciples that it was his heritage to the weak and irresolute of the world. In the hands of a strong man the leaf would avail nothing. In the hands of a feeble one it would achieve much."

"What would it do?" asked Wisbey curiously.

"Give force, give fruition, perhaps, to any command that such a one might issue."

Wisbey smiled. "I say, that's rather strong, isn't it?" he asked. "What's to prevent a chap commanding a thousand pounds from some millionaire?"

A smile curved the lips of the dealer. "The leaf, according to the story, will, of course, only grant its owner his wishes within certain reasonable limits. For instance, if you commanded that policeman opposite to arrest a man merely because you had a whim to that effect, I don't suppose for a moment that the leaf would be of much use to you. But if you commanded him to do something less outrageous—say, stop the traffic for you to cross the road, he would probably do it. A great deal, however, depends upon the formula. Here it is."

From the bottom of the alabaster box the old man extracted a green section of parchment containing certain characters. "The writing is Hindoo," he explained, "but the English of it is thus: 'I wish this to be done. Do not attempt to contradict me. It must and shall be as I have spoken.'"

Wisbey looked almost frightened. "Here, I say, that sound's a bit imperial, doesn't it?" he stammered.

"Quite so, my friend; but the author of the formula belonged to an age when men ruled men according to the way of the

strong. They were different indeed from our modern milk-and-water governments."

The old man seemed in love with his subject. He insisted on giving Wisbey a history of the tree, of its planting, its priests, its rites, and other highly interesting information.

"You ought to be able to make a fortune out of the leaves," said Wisbey at length.

"Hardly. Many persons will not buy a charm which requires any kind of outside aid. This is an age of sloth, of lethargy."

The atmosphere of the little shop was heavy with unusual odours. A very unusual dreaminess was now stealing over the brain of Wisbey. Magic! Magic! The word seemed to woo him like a melody. Often he had thought of the strange things of the Orient, often had longed to penetrate those entrancing secrets. It seemed to him that at last a listless Saturday afternoon stroll had brought him face to face with his dreams.

The traffic in Piccadilly, two streets distant, merged into the humming of tropical insects. Wisbey sat down and leaned his hot head on the counter.

"A ruler of men!" he mused.

"Yes," said the dealer. "Why not? Take this leaf, sir. See what comes of it. The price is nothing—a few shillings. And yet, as I have told you, there is no great demand. People either laugh at the idea of a leaf containing occult powers, or they tell me they prefer charms that work in silence."

He sighed. Then he took up a book, poring upon it, seemingly forgetful of Wisbey's presence.

"Let me feel it," said the young man. Decidedly it was a very unusual kind of leaf. It was an exact triangle.

The dealer, perceiving Wisbey's astonishment, nodded sagely. "Three angles," he murmured. "Each angle is a symbol of the elements that give a man power—self-confidence, strength, authority."

And now, as he grasped the leaf, a very strange glow swept Wisbey's being. It seemed to him that already his blood was tingling with resolves. He perceived massive possibilities. Suddenly his brain got an image of his employer, with his big, aggressive head and his revolving chair. That head, that deliberately-moving chair, had always seemed to him like incarnated authority. He had felt quelled, humble. But now, with the eyes of the brain, he saw the head dwindling till it became as the

cranium of a child. As for the chair, it might have found a place in a doll's house.

Then he thought about another person of authority—Rosie, his wife, Rosie with her acidulated tongue, her sharp, snappy manner, Rosie who invariably disagreed with him concerning everything. If he wanted a kipper for tea, she was certain to suggest a haddock. If Brighton appealed to him for the August Bank Holiday, Rosie would crush him with Southend. He felt, however, that with the leaf in his hand he could suggest Timbuctoo and she would yield a gracious assent.

"How much?" he asked in a whisper.

"Five shillings, please."

An impish notion then seized Wisbey. Here was a chance to test the alleged power of the leaf on the seller of it.

"I'll give you three-and-sixpence," he said.

"Five shillings is the price, sir. I am rather surprised at your bargaining over a matter of eighteenpence when the leaf may do so much for you."

The formula! Wisbey's brain groped for the formula. The words came at last to his trembling lips.

"I wish this to be done. Do not attempt to contradict me. It must and shall be as I have spoken."

The face of the dealer relaxed. "Well, have your wish," he said slowly. "I was a fool to tell you the formula before the purchase was complete. I was making a rod for my own back. Anyhow, take the leaf, and I wish you luck."

Wisbey quitted the shop with a triumphant smile. He looked quite two inches taller. No longer did he hang his head and trail his feet. In his pocket there lay the leaf from the Tree of the Rulers of Men.

* * * * *

On the way home Wisbey called at a certain newsagent's shop at the corner of a road near his house. Now, this agent had positively refused to send round the morning paper, pointing out that it would be quite easy for Wisbey to call in on his way to business. Grasping the leaf, the young man strode into the shop. Instead of his customary "Good afternoon!" he just jerked out—

"About that morning paper, now!"

"Well, and what about it, sir?" asked Mr. Hinks, with a dry smile.

For one moment Wisbey hesitated. The

big, aggressive fellow towered over him. Then the rough, prickly surface of the leaf seemed to send a certain courage through his blood.

The formula came pat and swift upon his lips: "I wish this to be done. I wish the paper to be sent round to me each morning. Do not attempt to contradict me. It must and shall be as I have spoken."

Mr. Hinks stared at him. "He's a teetotaler," murmured the man to his wife in an awed undertone. "If he wasn't, I should 'ave my suspicions."

"Do you hear me?" shouted Wisbey.

"I ought to. You're talking loud enough."

Several people were now coming in. Mr. Hinks shifted nervously from one foot to another. He hoped Wisbey wasn't going to make a scene.

"All right! All right!" he said hurriedly. "Don't worry, mister. Matter o' fact, I've got a boy now, and can cope better with the outdoor trade. You shall 'ave your paper first thing Monday morning."

After Wisbey had gone, Mr. Hinks made another comment to his wife.

"I noticed somethin' different in the chap," he remarked vaguely. "He seemed taller, stronger, some'ow. Just for a moment I wasn't really sure as it was him at all."

Meantime Wisbey was walking towards his home. He was now wondering whether he would have the pluck to try the leaf on Rosie. Rosie was a stiff proposition. Beside her Mr. Hinks was a mere lamb. But his confidence in the leaf encouraged him mightily. He recalled an article he had read in a Sunday paper concerning the power of the atom.

"After all," he reflected, "if an atom so small that you can't see it without a microscope can blow up a place like London, why shouldn't a leaf as big as a walnut be able to do its bit, too?"

When he arrived at the tiny house, he found Rosie in a state of annoyance. She sniffed angrily. "Late for tea, as usual," she observed. "You are a one! Well, I've washed up all the things, or, rather, Winnie has, and I'm going out to do some shopping."

Again the finger of Wisbey closed upon that wondrous leaf in his coat pocket. "I want my tea," he said quietly.

"Then want must be your master, my boy!"

"Rosie, I wish you to give me some tea. Do not attempt to contradict me. It must and shall be as I have spoken!"

She gave a little laugh. "Been to the theatre, have you?" she asked mockingly. "One of those Shakespeare plays, I expect. Now I come to think of it, you do put me in mind of that Julius Cæsar a bit. He was quite a little man like you when we saw him at the theatre."

Wisbey's heart gave a queer little thump of despair. Was the leaf going to fail him thus early? Making an enormous effort to control his voice, he again spoke the formula.

This time Rosie did not say anything. She looked at him with a slight crinkling of her white brow. Then she laughed again, but there was no mirth in the laugh this time. It was a laugh of uneasiness. She moved her feet nervously. And as Wisbey gazed upon her face, now filled with indecision, he knew that the magic of the leaf was holding good, after all.

Rosie suddenly came and threw her arms round his neck. It was at least a year since she had shown him any attention of this kind. "All right, you silly old boy," she said softly. "How funny you are to-day! Don't make such a fuss. You shall have your tea, of course. I was only teasing you a bit."

Whilst he ate the meal she regarded him with curious eyes. "Not been putting anything on your hair, have you?" she asked suddenly. "You look younger—different. Just for a minute I had a queer idea. I—I thought perhaps it wasn't you at all, but a twin-brother, or something. Silly, aren't I?"

"Very," replied Wisbey without hesitation.

A loud, irritating knocking sounded at the hall-door. A shade of vexation at once came to the face of Wisbey. He recognised the sound.

"Mr. Brittle," said Rosie brightly.

Wisbey loathed the man. He loathed also his long-winded, boring tales of real or imaginary adventures on tour. For Brittle had been an actor once, and never allowed anybody to forget the fact.

"Confound Brittle!" said Wisbey. Then he started violently, wondering whether he or somebody else had spoken those bold, those impious words. For Rosie rather liked Brittle, and, furthermore, Brittle liked Rosie. She was always snubbing her husband in the actor's presence, and Brittle seemed to enjoy seeing him snubbed.

"I am getting fed up with Brittle," announced Wisbey, as the knock was repeated.

The bore came in jauntily. He wore his usual aggressive buttonhole flower. He gave Wisbey a rude little nod, and then shook hands with Rosie, retaining her hand at least ten seconds longer than convention required.

Wisbey deliberately took the leaf from his pocket.

"Going in for botany, old man?" inquired the actor, with a grin.

"You can find out," replied Wisbey in a cold, deliberate voice.

Mr. Brittle went red, then his face assumed a colour like badly mottled soap. "I beg your pardon," he observed.

Rosie was staring at her husband with wide-open eyes.

"I said you could find out," repeated Wisbey. "Not deaf, are you?"

"Here, what's up?" asked Brittle nervously. "Aren't you well?"

"I'd be better if you left the 'ouse," replied Wisbey, omitting the "h" in the feverish excitement of the thrilling moment.

Mr. Brittle, with the theatrical instinct dominating his brain, endeavoured vainly to recall some "gag" from his repertoire that would meet the situation. Nothing, however, came to hand. He stared stupidly at Wisbey.

"Now, look here, Brittle," continued Wisbey, "I've had enough of you. That's what it comes to. Enough! Do you hear? I wish you to leave my house. Do not attempt to contradict me. It must and shall be as I have spoken."

For a moment Brittle looked undecided. Should he remain and face this queer business out, he asked himself, or should he take the line that offered the least resistance? He looked at Rosie. She giggled, foolishly, feebly, it seemed to him almost painfully.

Then she shrugged her shoulders. No encouragement, no help from that quarter, reflected Brittle swiftly, telling himself that women, even the most adorable of them, were rather futile in real emergencies of the spirit.

Wisbey went to the door. He held it open with a truly grand gesture. Oh, yes, make no mistake, the power of the Tree of the Rulers of Men was stirring his blood. Had Brittle shown a vestige of fight, one may safely assume that Wisbey would have punched his head.

When, a little later, he sat and smoked a cigarette in the garden with Rosie beside him, he wondered vaguely how he had

managed the business. Of one thing, however, he was certain—the leaf undoubtedly held enormous powers.

* * * * *

In the days that followed he frequently tested the magic of the leaf. For instance,

a law as inevitable, apparently, as the law of gravitation. The time had come, he pondered, to end this unhappy state of matters.

Taking advantage of a lull in the business one afternoon, he grasped his leaf and rapped



“‘Now, look here, Brittle,’ continued Wisbey, ‘I’ve had enough of you. That’s what it comes to. Enough! Do you hear? And now I must ask you to leave my house.’”

there was a little restaurant which he frequented for lunch. The waitress, in spite of generous tips, had treated him rather badly. The toughest beef, the most watery potatoes, and the most unresponsive puddings, had found their way to the table of Wisbey by

loudly on the plate. “Miss!” he said sternly.

He jerked out the word with such emphasis that she abandoned an exchange of witticisms with a favourite patron and went swiftly to the table.

"Well?" she asked pertly.

"Now, look here," said Wisbey, "the food is getting worse and worse. If ever any stuff seems bad, you bring it to me."

"There's other places," said the girl, "and if you don't like——"

This argument seemed to impress the young woman. The fact that occasionally she did some shopping in Queen's Road brought home the parable with a certain force.

"You've never complained before," she remarked lamely.

Wisbey felt that if he continued the argument he would certainly be defeated. This overpowering young woman, with her long, self-satisfied neck and her bobbed hair, seemed to dominate him. He must have recourse to the formula, which thus far had not failed him.

"I wish to see that I get better served in future, miss. Do not attempt to contradict me. It must and shall be as I have spoken."

Then he waited, trembling. The magic worked once more. The girl stared a little, as Mr. Hinks, and Rosie, and Brittle had stared. Then she went away quickly, silently.

Next day, when he came in to lunch, his steak was irreproachable. Baked potatoes—a delicacy of the establishment—which had usually been "off" when demanded by Wisbey, now became "on" in a most admirable fashion. The very cabbage seemed to have attained a new greenness, the old yellow hue was gone, apparently, for ever. The lunch was a decided success. O wonderful leaf! O wonderful Tree of the Rulers of Men!

But this delightful episode was only one of many. Wisbey was in a positive delirium of delight. He blessed the leaf, he blessed Soho, he blessed the dealer. Everything was now going smoothly for him. At home Rosie actually sang at her

work and was quite affectionate. His tea was always ready when he came home, and it was good tea—tea with a body in it, not the wishy-washy stuff of the former time.

And now Wisbey began to take more pains with his appearance. People were

"For a moment Brittle looked undecided."

"That's no answer," he retorted quickly. "Business isn't done like that. If you went to Whiteley's and told them you didn't like something you'd bought there, they wouldn't tell you to go to Selfridge's or Harrod's or Barker's."



believing in him now, therefore he was coming to believe in himself. So the days passed and the weeks, and there arrived at length the day when it was whispered in the office that the bi-annual visit of the Great Man was expected.

* * * * *

The clerks went their way in fear and trembling. The Great Man, known as "Efficiency Smith," was the president of the Company, and he lived in Chicago. Twice a year he descended on the London branch, and then there was weeping and wailing in Victoria Street.

In the bad old days, before the advent of the leaf, Wisbey would have been stricken into a paroxysm of fear. He would probably have gone sick in order to keep out of the path of Efficiency Smith. But what did he care now? As a matter of fact, he felt what was almost a patronising sensation towards the autocrat. He rather pitied Smith because he hadn't got a leaf as well.

In the fulness of time the visitation happened. During the very first week three clerks received notice to go. Other executions were pending. Even old Holliday, the manager, before whom Wisbey had often quailed, was had up on the carpet, and quitted the room looking not much bigger than the office boy.

Wisbey smiled confidently as he heard of these things. He intended making a bold experiment. He meant to interview Efficiency Smith and demand—not ask—a rise of salary. Moreover, he intended choosing a day for his interview when Smith was at his deadliest.

There came the day at last—a hot, airless, nerve-racking morning—when Efficiency Smith, waking with a severe attack of liver and efficiency, descended on the office like a destroying angel. His loud, irritating voice could be heard from time to time penetrating the door of his room. It mocked, it roared, it scarified. The manager came out, wiping his forehead.

"Another ten minutes of that, and I should have put in my ticket," he told the cashier.

"Pretty hot in there, eh, this morning?" remarked the cashier.

"Hot!" echoed the manager. "If it's much hotter than that, I know what the address'll be!"

Wisbey walked calmly to the door of the room which enclosed the tornado. In one hand he held the leaf. With the other he gave a bold rap at the door.

"Well, what is it? What is it?" asked the rasping voice.

"It's *me*," replied Wisbey, as he came in and calmly looked at the figure in the big chair. The sight of the small visitor confronting him with majestic indifference staggered Efficiency Smith.

"Here, what the——" he began.

"Pardon me," said Wisbey quietly—he did not even call the man "sir"; those who owned the leaf from the Tree of the Rulers of Men had no need for ordinary formalities—"pardon me, but I wish to have a short interview."

Smith faced round. He fixed the madman, as he decided the fellow must be, with piercing, aggressive-looking glasses.

"Oh, you do, do you?" he asked. His temper, tried all the morning by the horrible monotony of obsequious bows and polite hypocrisies, was almost solaced by the sight of this cool, self-confident little apparition.

"Well, who are you, anyway?" he jerked out, not unpleasantly. "One of the juniors, eh?"

"The oldest junior," replied Wisbey firmly. "I have been with the company eight years. I thought you would know me."

Efficiency Smith actually grinned. "Well, if not, I guess I'll get introduced," he drawled. He lighted a cigar and looked at the visitor. "Go on, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Wisbey," said the owner of that name. "But the name doesn't matter. I've come to tell you that I am not being fairly treated. My salary is one hundred and thirty pounds a year. I have asked your manager for an increase, which he refused. I therefore come to you, relying on your sense of justice, to request you to look into the matter, and to see that I am properly remunerated. Of course I am not suggesting that the salary is a bad one, but——"

"Here, hold on a minute!"

"Excuse me, I haven't finished yet." Wisbey clutched the leaf and fervently prayed that the power would not fail him, for he was beginning to feel that he could not keep this up much longer. "The salary is good from one point of view, but not from mine. I therefore ask for an immediate and adequate increase."

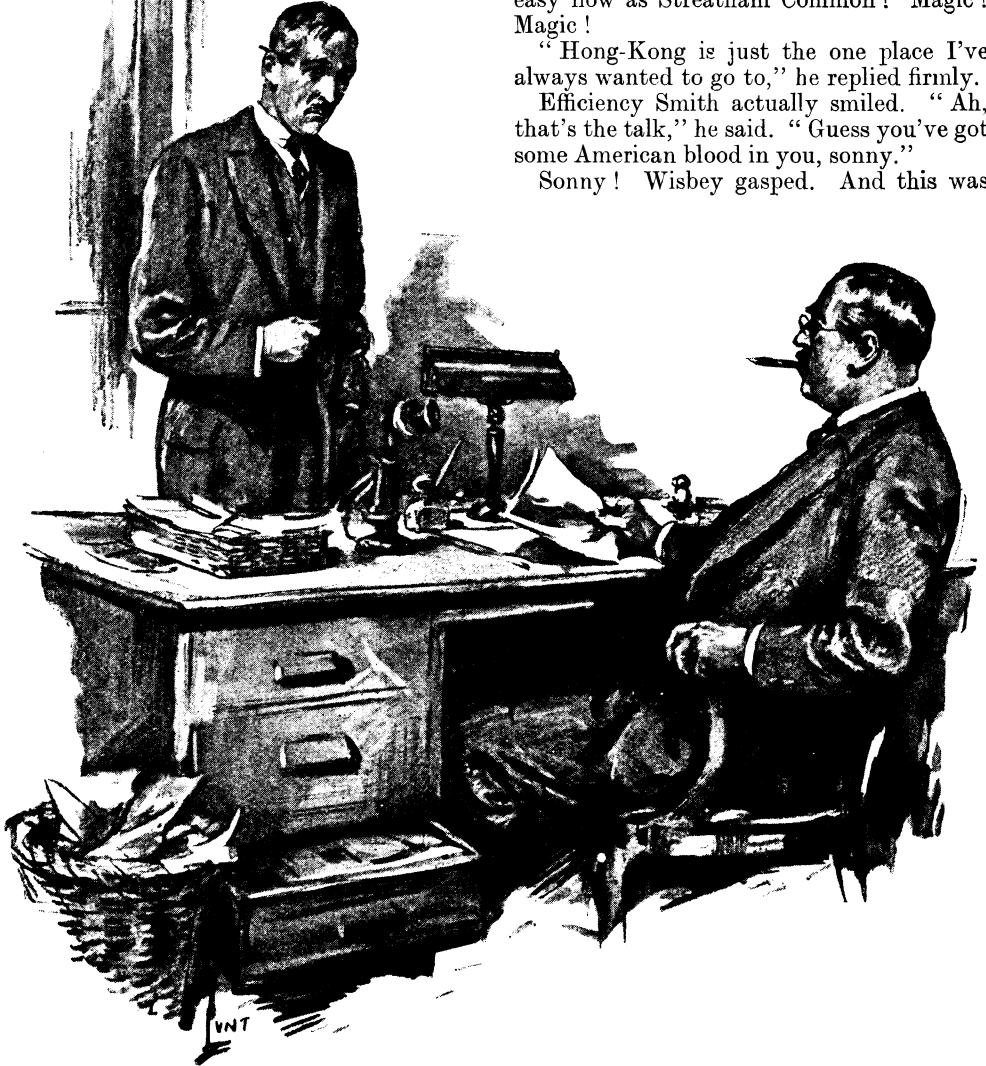
Efficiency Smith looked at him very steadily. "Suppose I fire you instead?" he asked.

"If you sack me," said Wisbey swiftly and mendaciously, "it will really not matter

much. Messrs. Horrabin and Jones have a vacancy. They won't be sorry to take a man who has been with you. In fact, I think they would be rather pleased."

"H'm! Sounds like blackmail. Well, you are a very smart young fellow."

"I know my business."



"Efficiency Smith looked at him very steadily. 'Suppose I fire you instead?' he asked."

A pause, quite a long pause. Efficiency Smith took up a paper-knife, balanced it skilfully on his forefinger, and then put it down and looked at Wisbey again.

"See here, would you like to go to Hong-

Kong?" he asked with extraordinary irrelevance.

There was a time when Wisbey would have shuddered at the mere idea of a journey, of the new faces, of the hundred perils that beset the voyager. But he knew now that the tiny leaf that lay clutched in his hand would sustain him a conqueror wherever his foot trod. Hong-Kong, indeed! Why, Central Africa would have seemed as easy now as Streatham Common! Magic! Magic!

"Hong-Kong is just the one place I've always wanted to go to," he replied firmly.

Efficiency Smith actually smiled. "Ah, that's the talk," he said. "Guess you've got some American blood in you, sonny."

Sonny! Wisbey gasped. And this was

the man who had sent two dozen clerks, a manager, an assistant manager and two office boys into hysteria of fear. Well, the age of miracles still endured.

"Reckon I might try you," went on

Smith. "It's a job that don't want overmuch experience, but it wants a fellow who can handle men—keep a grip on 'em. And do you know, Mr Wisbey, I have a notion that you might be very clever at that. I had half intended sending Woods, but the guy looked so sick when I tackled him that I kicked him out instead. Now, you——"

"Yes, me," said Wisbey proudly, as he held back a wild impulse to kiss the blessed leaf.

"Well, you seem different. The salary would be one hundred pounds a year over your present rate. You'd have a house, too. Not married, are you?"

"Yes, but my wife will raise no objection," replied Wisbey. "Does what I tell her!"

Efficiency Smith restrained a sigh. "You are luckier than I am," he was going to say. But he said instead—

"I will arrange the details with Mr. Holliday. You will be ready to go in a month?"

"Next week, if necessary," Wisbey flashed back. "Thank you very much!"

* * * * *

"Oh, and by the way, Annie," said the dealer that evening to his wife, "I've run out of those Indian lucky leaves. Pop out into the garden and get some more. And be sure you cut out the triangles as neat as you can. The last lot went off like hot cakes!"



THE TURN O' THE YEAR.

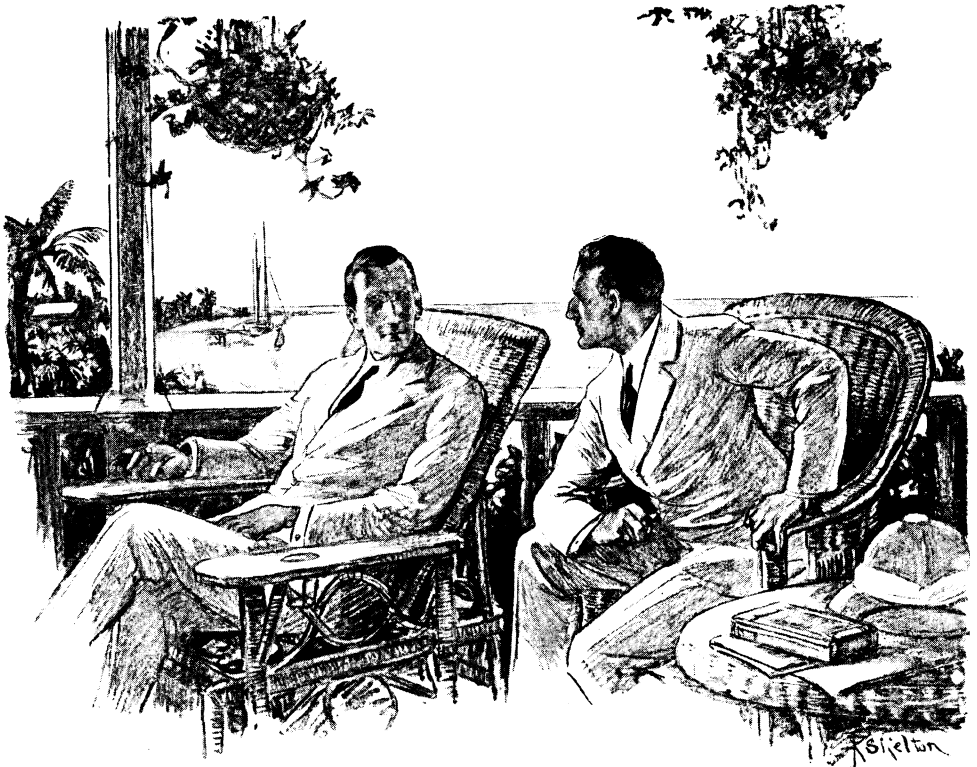
PEACE broods upon the fields, and on the hill,
 Shrouded in mist, the dim, shy sunlight smiles;
 A creaking wain climbs upward to the mill,
 The starlings twitter in their leafy aisles.

The Summer's dead, the apples gathered in;
 Springtime is but a dream of dancing leaves;
 The corn is stored away in byre and bin,
 Bare stand the meadows of their golden sheaves.

Soon will the swallows gather for their flight
 To southern lands with golden sunlight gay;
 Leave us to Winter and the long, cold night
 That creeps unwillingly at dawn away.

O bird of happy omen, swallow dear,
 Tarry not long afar in foreign field;
 Bring us the kindly skies of summer near,
 Flooding with sunshine our green Sussex weald!

R. B. INCE.



"Can you tell me whereabouts in this island I can find a man called Richard Bell?"

THE FINAL GOAL

By ETHEL M. RADBOURNE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

WHEN he had come close to the bungalow, Calder paused before making his presence known. The heat of a tropical sun made him limp. For a moment he thought himself a fool for his pains. At this hour he might have been sitting in a cool corner of his club, with the ice tinkling in a glass at his elbow. At the touch of a bell old Marris, the waiter, would move softly to his side, awaiting his orders. Everything decorous, easy, hour following hour in well-ordered array. And to-day found him on an island of the tropics, moving under a sweltering sun.

Calder stared about him, seeking a means of making himself known. In a God-

forsaken place like this there would be no bells. He had a momentary inclination to clap his hands in imitation of Arabian Nights grandees. A troop of slaves might respond to the call, and he would order ice, palm fans, a divan.

He lifted his voice. "Is anyone about?"

There was a sound of quick footsteps, and a black man appeared at the edge of the verandah.

"Is Mr. Strong at home?" Calder asked.

The man's smile showed a flash of white teeth. His gesture of affirmation was unmistakable. Calder took a torrent of words as an announcement that Mr. Strong would appear shortly. Meantime he sank with a sigh of relief into an easy-chair on

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the verandah. The black man padded away again. Presently his voice could be heard chattering in the distance. Another voice responded, crisp, clear-cut.

"Nice voice," Calder nodded. "Wonder what sort of fellow he is? Queer idea to bury himself here and be grilled to death. Odd corner of the world, this."

He fought drowsiness born of the sun's ardour. Even in the shade of the verandah the heat was intense. Flowers in hanging baskets assailed him with heavy fragrance. A bird flew high above the bungalow; a flash of scarlet wings, and it was gone. Far out at sea a coral island shimmered in the sunlight. A strange goal for a man used to the din and clamour of city streets.

Calder rose to his feet as his host came on to the verandah.

"Welcome to Toaripi. Not many of my countrymen chance this way."

"I suppose not," Calder answered. "It's rather a long jaunt. I came out from Sydney on a small trading boat." He pointed to the beach. "They're after copra. As soon as the deal's over they're off—to-morrow morning probably. I heard of you from the captain. He said: 'There's a white man called Strong up there, who'll tell you anything you want to know about the island.' You've been here a good while now?"

"Long enough to know the island well."

Calder nodded. "You can help me, if you will."

Strong had drawn a chair alongside Calder's and lighted a cigar. Calder eyed him sideways. A fine physique to match his name—features clear-cut, something of the dreamer about the eyes, mouth set into firm lines and well-chiselled. A man who could keep his own secrets and other people's. On the spur of that last thought Calder bent quickly forward.

"Can you tell me whereabouts in this island I can find a man called Richard Bell? There are reasons why I must see him."

"You sound as if the encounter might be an unpleasant one for Bell," Strong suggested. He turned slightly in his chair, watching Calder's face—some emotion had distorted it momentarily.

"It won't be an afternoon tea-party," Calder affirmed. "We have things to say to each other, he and I."

Calder was silent for a minute, realising the rasp of his own voice. The thought of Bell plucked at his self-control as if to rob him. In his pause the roar of the surf was

like the swell of an organ. Calder's eyes travelled further up the bay. About half a mile away another bungalow stood at the edge of a grove of trees.

Calder leant forward, staring. "Whose place is that?"

"It belongs to a friend of mine," Strong answered. There was a hint of finality in his voice.

Calder's mental interpretation was swift. "That's Bell's place. And he has won this man's friendship." He fought for self-control and lost it. His tongue loosed; he became vehement. "I must talk about Bell. Say, the man's life resembles a shield. You know one side only. I'll show you the other. I haven't come half over the world to sit mute before a friend of Richard Bell's."

Calder hunted in his pocket for his card and pushed it across the table. "You don't know my name yet. I forgot to send this in with your man."

Strong glanced at the card. From it his eyes lifted to Calder's face. His expression was inscrutable.

"Have you ever heard Bell mention my name?" Calder asked.

"Occasionally." Strong lay back in his chair, watching smoke rings lace themselves above his head. "Bell isn't loquacious. A man who sees his goal clearly and moves towards it, avoiding side-tracks. If life gives him a set-back, he doesn't whine. That's Bell."

"An attractive picture," Calder said drily.

"Also let me tell you again that I stand by Bell. We see eye to eye."

Calder leant forward. "At least you'll give me a hearing? Convention"—he glanced about him—"out here you're surely stripped of that. No polite fiddle-faddles of the drawing-room. We only met half an hour ago, but I'm going to tell you why I must see Richard Bell."

"Certainly," Strong nodded. "It will be interesting. Bell and I can laugh together afterwards."

Calder controlled himself with an effort. His sentences ran on evenly, with the persistent sound of the surf for background.

"There's a woman in the story, of course—*cherchez la femme*. When I first met her—Jove, how she made me think of flowers and sunshine! She was always a dreamer—saw things from her own angle. I didn't pretend to understand her. But I loved her. Her own people hadn't an ounce of sympathy for dreams and fancies. She

listened to me because I showed her a way of escape. Married to me she could follow her own tastes unmolested. She consented. Those were happy days."

Calder paused. Memory buffeted him. He struggled, bruised, to a foothold of derision.

"Women are too easily swayed by their emotions. Show them fool ideas dressed in motley, and ten to one they'll think they've found the heart of wisdom. Kitty was like that. She went away out to California to see a relative of her mother's, and whilst there she met Richard Bell. She wrote of him to me. The fellow seems to have posed as a kindred spirit. Two choice souls not understood of the world—the jargon sickened me. It robbed me of her, too. Her letters became fewer—ceased. The relative wrote me finally that her niece had decided to stay on with her indefinitely. She added, incidentally, that Richard Bell had gone away to an island in the tropics on some fool's errand."

Calder glanced to right and left of him, stemming his flow of sentences. The novelty of his surroundings made the scene as something enacted behind footlights. Scarlet flowers in baskets along the edge of the verandah were a clever touch of stage arrangement, vivid to match the thought of the playwright.

"I didn't let her go easily," Calder affirmed. "I went out to California to see her. Useless. She had a vocation. Her days must be given to the arts. She moved in a kind of gossamer web of her own spinning—her aunt's descriptive phrase. I saw that I was beaten, and I left her. A year afterward I had a letter from the aunt, asking if I knew anything of Kitty's whereabouts—she had gone away, leaving no message as to her plans. From that day to this I have not heard of her. Bell's robbery. But for him she would have been my wife to-day."

Calder turned his head, so that the other bungalow came into his line of vision. "I want half an hour's chat with your chum. I have things to say to him." He swung quickly round in his chair. "I suppose I owe you some sort of apology. I drop on to your verandah from the other side of the globe, and talk as if I'd known you for years."

"You don't expect me to agree with your estimate of Bell?" Strong asked quietly.

Calder studied the other's face. "Why,

no. I should say you'd stick to your friend, fair weather or foul. But I'm going over to that bungalow."

Strong got to his feet and moved to the edge of the verandah. "There are steps down to the sands. It's only ten minutes' walk."

"If Bell isn't in, I shall find some other means of seeing him." Calder was moving down the steps as he spoke. From the level of the sands he looked up into Strong's face. He saw a faint flicker of derision, gone as soon as he detected it. The next moment Calder was going at a swinging rate along the sands. Something burnt within him so hotly that he ignored the fierce ardour of the sun. He scarcely noticed the shade of the next bungalow when he reached it. He glanced impatiently from right to left. Silence was like a wall set over against his eagerness. He lifted his voice and called: "Is anyone there?"

The silence holding, Calder crossed the verandah, stooped, and peered into one of the rooms. A sitting-room, startlingly modern for a small island of the tropics, chintz-covered chairs, a piano, book-stands. . . .

Calder called once more: "Is anyone about?"

Silence was like a spark, firing Calder's impatience till it rose to flame-point. He stepped across the low window into the sitting-room. An embroidered screen, a tall bookcase—were these shelters behind which a craven hid from the man he had robbed?

The sound of the waves tumbling in from the Pacific was giant's music, loudly played. The stillness of this room was like the circle of calm at the heart of a cyclone. Stillness. . . .

Calder broke it again with a quick call: "Hallo, there! Hallo!"

Calder's eyes took in the detail of the room. Pictures, books—he eyed the pictures, moving nearer to them. Not subjects for the commonplace man—dreams painted on canvas, visions translated. Calder turned from them with a shrug. The books? Still suggesting dreams and fancies. Even simple books of the kind had always vaguely disquieted him. "The Blue Bird," "The Snow Image"—what could a plain matter-of-fact man like himself see in them? He remembered hot discussions with Kitty about books.

Kitty!

He came back to the centre of the floor,

staring about him again. How utterly at home she would have felt here! Everything—the room and its contents, its setting near the endless reverberations of the waves. He could see her, eager-eyed, at the shrine of beauty. Here she could sit and weave fancies, give rein to the side of her he had never understood.

He suddenly stooped to the floor. Something lying against one of the chairs caught his attention. A woman's work-bag. He lifted it from the ground. And instantly he was besieged by memory. Kitty sewing, with just such a bag lying on her knee; he remembered the quaint flame-coloured embroidery. The scent that clung to it was like a voice, calling.

"Kitty?"

He spoke aloud as if she called. Even the succeeding silence could not rob him of the sense of her nearness.

Footsteps came along the edge of the verandah. Calder turned his head sharply and saw a face peering at him through the half-drawn curtain.

"Pretty little place, isn't it, Mr. Calder? Not the sort of thing you usually drop across on these islands."

Calder recognised the captain of the boat he had travelled on. He stepped on to the verandah to join him.

"There's nobody there." Captain Dunn jerked his hand towards the empty room.

"Not just now. I'm waiting till the owner of the place comes in. I have business with him."

Calder saw the other eye him sideways, keenly scrutinising.

"Not much time for waiting if you're coming along with us, Mr. Calder. There's no business doing. We shall sail as soon as the tide allows."

Calder was moving automatically at the other's side. He made a remark about passing the time until the occupant of the bungalow returned.

"There's no occupant."

Calder ceased to move. He glanced behind and before at the track of white sand. The quick dusk of the tropics had commenced to fall. Already stars hung like distant lamps in a vaulted roof.

"Do you mean that no one lives there?"

"Nobody."

Calder stooped forward, peering at the other's face.

"How do you know? The place is furnished. There was even a woman's work-bag lying on the floor."

"The case, but no jewel," the captain quoted under his breath.

Calder heard him. His voice rasped on the next sentence. "Don't talk in parables. Give me plain facts."

The captain jerked his hand up quickly. "There's one of them."

They had come close to Strong's bungalow. Hanging lamps lighted the verandah. Calder saw detail—lounge chair, book-stands, a table set for a meal.

The captain's question came deliberately. "You saw Bell this afternoon?"

"Bell? No, he's elusive. I saw his friend Strong."

Captain lighted a cigarette, stooping to shield the flame of the match. "A rose by any other name"—pardon, you don't like quotations. The plain fact is that Strong and Bell live under the same head of hair. The natives love nicknames. Bell stands in their eyes as a strong man, one to obey, skilful in dealing with matters of policy, a man of weight in the island—hence Mr. Strong."

Calder stood staring up at the verandah. It was like an empty stage set for some actor. The thunder of the surf was a vast orchestral accompaniment. Calder could have imagined that out beyond that beating rhythm of sound an audience silently waited for Bell's advent.

"He lives alone there save for his servants," Captain Dunn said. "As for that other bungalow, it has always been empty. I'll tell you why whilst we wait for the tide."

The captain turned towards the shore. Instinctively Calder followed.

"You seem to be an encyclopædia," he said quickly. "How do you come to know all this?"

The other's gesture was silencing. "Presently," it seemed to say, "when we are out of reach of Bell's ears."

Calder followed automatically. His body boarded the boat alongside Captain Dunn's; his thoughts were back on shore with the man whose ironical smile had whipped him. At the memory of it he rose to his feet again quickly.

"I followed you, hardly knowing what I was doing. I must go back and have my reckoning with Bell."

"Why, since he's loser?"

Calder was standing, one hand resting on the cabin table. He bent forward now, searching the captain's face.

"What do you mean?"

"Sit down and smoke, and I'll tell you."



"'Pretty little place, isn't it, Mr. Calder? Not the sort of thing you usually drop across in these islands.'"

Calder pulled a chair forward. He pushed the cigar box aside impatiently.

"You asked how I came to know about that empty bungalow. The knowledge came to me in my line of business. Some few months ago I had a passenger on board this boat—a woman. She was bound for Toaripi. Pretty woman she was, thick

plaits of brown hair and big eyes . . . I'm no hand at describing women's looks. She was as straight, clean-souled a little woman as I'd ever met. Toaripi seemed a queer goal for her. She wasn't in good spirits, either—would sit on deck staring at the skyline and her hands plucking at each other as if she knew fear. Found her crying once. There wasn't a soul on board she'd talk to except myself. She trusted bluff, bald-headed Captain Dunn. I told her I'd a daughter of my own in Sydney, about her age. That won her confidence. She told me she was going out to Toaripi to be married to a man called Richard Bell. 'But

I'm afraid,' she broke out suddenly. 'I live in dread of the day when we shall sight that island.'"

Calder fumed at the deliberation of the captain's pause. In it he could fancy the wash of the sea against a boatside, the straight cleavage of the prow through water, daily nearing an island in the tropics. And a woman on board who did not want to land.

Calder's voice broke silence sharply. "But she did land. That room in the bungalow—I tell you I saw her books, pictures, the embroidered bag I used to see her carry."

"Things," Captain Dunn interposed. "Lumber. *She* was never there."

Calder drew a quick breath. "Explain, then."

"A little bit of a woman—and *afraid*. What could I do but offer help? 'Need I land, Captain Dunn?' she'd ask me. 'Can't I hide on board?' 'Easily,' said I. 'I'd have made it easy for her if there had been twenty men on Toaripi keen on her landing. Her things had already gone on, she told me. Bell intended to have the new bungalow shipshape before her arrival. He'd arranged her books, her pictures. 'You'll not mind losing them?' I asked. 'They're just *things*,' she answered. 'I've learnt they hardly count.'"

Calder was staring out of one of the port-holes. A vivid moon had swung into the sky. Stars thronged about her. The sea showed iridescent beneath the splendour of the heavens. Along the shore a few lights pierced the darkness. Bell's bungalow showed illumined; almost he could distinguish detail. Further along the coast, where the other bungalow stood, was complete darkness.

"I pushed aside polite manners," Captain Dunn said abruptly. "I asked her point-blank 'Is there someone else?' Her face answered; tears, too—a sudden storm of them. 'Does he *know*?' said I. 'I was engaged to him,' she said. 'I gave him up to chase dreams—little fool that I was.'"

Calder's hand came heavily on the captain's shoulder.

"Where is she?"

For answer the other took a letter from his breast-pocket and pushed it across the table. "Let her tell you. I'm going on deck to see the mate."

Calder stooped to the light of a swinging lamp. Sentences danced before his eyes, steadied presently, and became eloquent.

"DEAR JIM.—If you ever read this, it will be in Captain Dunn's cabin and within sight of Toaripi. A hundred times I've said to myself, 'Does Jim care enough to follow me and give me a chance of owning myself in the wrong?' *Jim*, how I've longed for your arms! As if all the dreams and fancies in the world could weigh beside your love! I've had to come a long way to learn my mistake."

Calder's eyes blurred momentarily, lost the focus of the written sentences. The drift of them seemed to come from some infinite distance. Her pride urged silence, and her heart urged speech. If Calder loved her still, distance would not matter; he would come, even to Toaripi, to learn how life was using her. If he did, then Captain Dunn was to give him her letter. . . .

Calder felt the wash of the tide against the boat. It began to dip and sway, to stir presently as a thing alive and eager for escape. He turned a page of the letter and read on.

"Jim, aren't mere trappings negligible? Because my tastes didn't run alongside yours, I gave you up. For a cobweb I sacrificed gold! Forgive me. If you care still, forget my folly. I am in Sydney, staying in Captain Dunn's house with his daughter."

Calder thrust the written sheets into his pocket. With a few strides he reached the deck. A lamp showed him the captain's figure etched against the darkness. Calder strode to his side.

"When do we sail?"

"At dawn."

"How long back to Sydney? What? No quicker?" Calder's hands lifted and fell impatiently. "I'd like to hire the winged feet of Mercury."

Again lights on Bell's bungalow caught his eye. Detail—the dinner table, flowers, hanging lamp—a stage set near the thunder of the surf. Further along the coast the moon set fingers of derision upon an empty bungalow—casket with no jewel. Kitty's books, pictures, music she loved—the sheath of loveliness she had woven about her personality.

"Just *things*," she had said. "I've learnt they hardly count."

Calder drew a long breath and smote Captain Dunn heavily on the shoulder.

"Let's make a record—the fastest run ever compassed between here and Sydney."

To Calder the dip and sway of the boat held imagery of fluttering wings, as if a homing pigeon stirred and preened itself before its flight.



PATHFINDER

By FAY INCHFAWN

Author of "Homely Verses of a Home Lover."

YOU must go forth alone, my lad,
Before the break of day,
Before the stars have faded out,
Or night has slipped away.

And none must rise to see you go,
Nor hold you any more,
Nor follow with you as you pass
From the familiar door.

And if the scent of jessamine
Calls after you, and cries,
Then turn away your heart, my lad,
And turn away your eyes.

Follow the lonely trail and press
Into the vast unknown ;
The great adventure will not come
Until you are alone.

There in the quiet of the dawn,
Lulled by the twilit sky,
Your own true soul shall talk with you,
And you shall make reply.



"Pipe in mouth, O'Donovan waited."

A SENSE OF PROPORTION

By A. R. GRAHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

O'DONOVAN was already a murderer in his heart. In front of him the ground sloped gently downwards, studded with occasional bamboo clumps, stunted trees, and an irregular growth of tall, untidy grasses. On his left he could see the long heaped beds of the Bauchi pagan cultivators. In the golden glow of the late afternoon partridge and guinea-fowl clucked and called.

Pipe in mouth, O'Donovan waited. One day, it was certain, Forsyth would come. He would catch a glimpse between the dry vegetation; a sun-helmet would appear, catch the sun, and disappear again as its

owner worked around the cultivated patch, intent on the restocking of his larder.

That day was certain to come, and O'Donovan's eyes swept round in unwearied search, while a soft thrill of excitement ebbed and surged through him. Accidentally he was going to shoot Forsyth in the region of the heart. Many times in his mind's eye he had seen him throw up his hands and fall. In fact, for some time past he had ceased to reason things out. After the semi-automatic performance of his working hours, efficiently controlling a scattered force of undisciplined native labour, he would let go, relax, and let the little pictures come and go.

High up on the West African plateau, working his own alluvials, O'Donovan lived alone, reasonably fortunate, hard-working, practical.

Then one day moral bankruptcy supervened. There was no obvious and adequate motive for his behaviour. Quietly and suddenly the change had come about. Perhaps in the heat and solitude of the torrid zones things of the spirit, like the output of the soil, grow to maturity with bewildering rapidity.

On that day, down by the north boundary, he had sat at ease, smoking in the soft warm light after the afternoon's fierce sun. Heaped granite bosses on his right front marked the corner of his claim; every curve and line were familiar. For the very first time his mind began to play with the idea of change.

He fixed his eyes on a swelling hundred tons of compact rock rested like a great potato on the rounder corners of mountainous boulders below. From where he sat it looked insecure, as if a good push might destroy its balance. A dull earth-shaking crash, a murmur of echoes in the hills, and the hundred-ton block would have rolled down and settled, fifty feet to the north. It was a pleasant fancy, if an absurd one.

At the very top of that rock stood a triangular monument of stones, the corner post of O'Donovan's own mining lease—surface mining, with the black tin concentrates a bare ten feet down.

Bamboo clusters filled the narrow flat-bottomed valley. Towering granite walls bounded it, and, serpentine between, the attenuated stream, the poor remnant of some ancient rock-sculpturing flood, sorted and re-sorted with its annual spates the heavy precious sands, left over as the untransportable residuum of vanished hills.

For the third time in a fortnight O'Donovan's evening stroll had taken him to the north end of his lease, where there was nothing to shoot and nothing to do.

Over the boundary line, barely a dozen paces up stream, young Forsyth had a small fortune in the shape of a dark streak of blacker sands, lying shallow and easy to hand, unworked as yet because he was "busy" further up—busy with something better still, of course.

Oppressed by the breathless stillness of a mutely expectant world, and impelled by a nervous unease that denied the rest his limbs desired, O'Donovan rose and wandered listlessly along the boundary line.

Not a thing stirred in the grey bamboo thickets till he crossed the stream on a fallen tree, and a fool of a bird fluttered through the canes with a hollow, mirthless laugh. "Ho! Ho! Ho!" it mocked in strangely human tones.

O'Donovan fired, though the range was absurd and the creature unfit for food. Then he went on, and stared unthinkingly at the further corner post. It was on the flat, this one, and perfectly easy to move.

Smiling a little, he pictured himself, by the light of the African moon, carefully removing and re-erecting that simple structure of stones. One would have to be very careful in restoring the ground to its natural appearance.

He even imagined himself going the long bridle path detour to Forsyth's the next morning, and keeping the youngster busy for a few hours while the hot sun dried out the newly disturbed earth, "in case"; then he laughed and turned homewards. On that day it was never anything but a silly fancy. The Mines offices had their plans and their own check points. Any tampering with boundaries would be entirely foolish.

In the fading light O'Donovan came home through a fairyland of feathery bamboo, relieved, near home, by a generous growth of timber.

O'Donovan's bush camp was snug and well-disposed on a small plateau by the river. Round mud houses blended with the soil out of which they were made; a ring of shady trees made the "yard" a homely pleasant place. And all was orderly and well-kept.

He climbed the last short zig-zag path and shouted as he crossed the yard. An answering shout came from the cookhouse, and a Coast boy hurried across with a tray of drinks.

O'Donovan cursed him mechanically, without enthusiasm. It was a habit, but the expression on the boy's black face changed instantly to a sullen defensiveness. Though he was used to being sworn at in O'Donovan's service, the moment had caught him off his guard. Some natural optimism, responding to the golden peace of the sunset and the scented stillness of the waking bush, had allowed him, unconsciously for a moment, to expect a similar benevolence from his master.

Having bathed and dined, O'Donovan went to bed. The day ended apparently like any other day. But the changes that

followed came swiftly, unperceived and terrible.

It became a habit, after the day's work, to stroll along with a gun to the north boundary, there to sit and think. No, not think—just to let things float into his mind, flutter round and go—odd things that grew clearer and more coherent as the days passed.

himself in the imaginary picture, sitting unsuspectingly on the very spot, a green-covered patch of soil, where the mass of rock would rest—unsuspecting at one moment, starting to his feet the next, to be crushed, obliterated, squashed and buried with a hundred tons of massive granite as a noble tombstone.

The day the story reached this point



"Only Forsyth had seen O'Donovan's Coast boy."

An amusing little fairy tale his imagination built for him in the rock-and-bamboo solitude by the boundary. Variations introduced themselves, and it all became more real; he now knew exactly where the big boulder would come to rest when dislodged, and where the charge of powder would be put to start it.

Then one day he laughed to see Forsyth

O'Donovan laughed aloud at the absurdity of it, then became suddenly thoughtful as a new aspect thrust itself before him.

With Forsyth out of the way, who would call the Mines Department, a hundred and fifty miles away?

If Forsyth was just "missing"? He could see interminable delays if Forsyth was "missing."

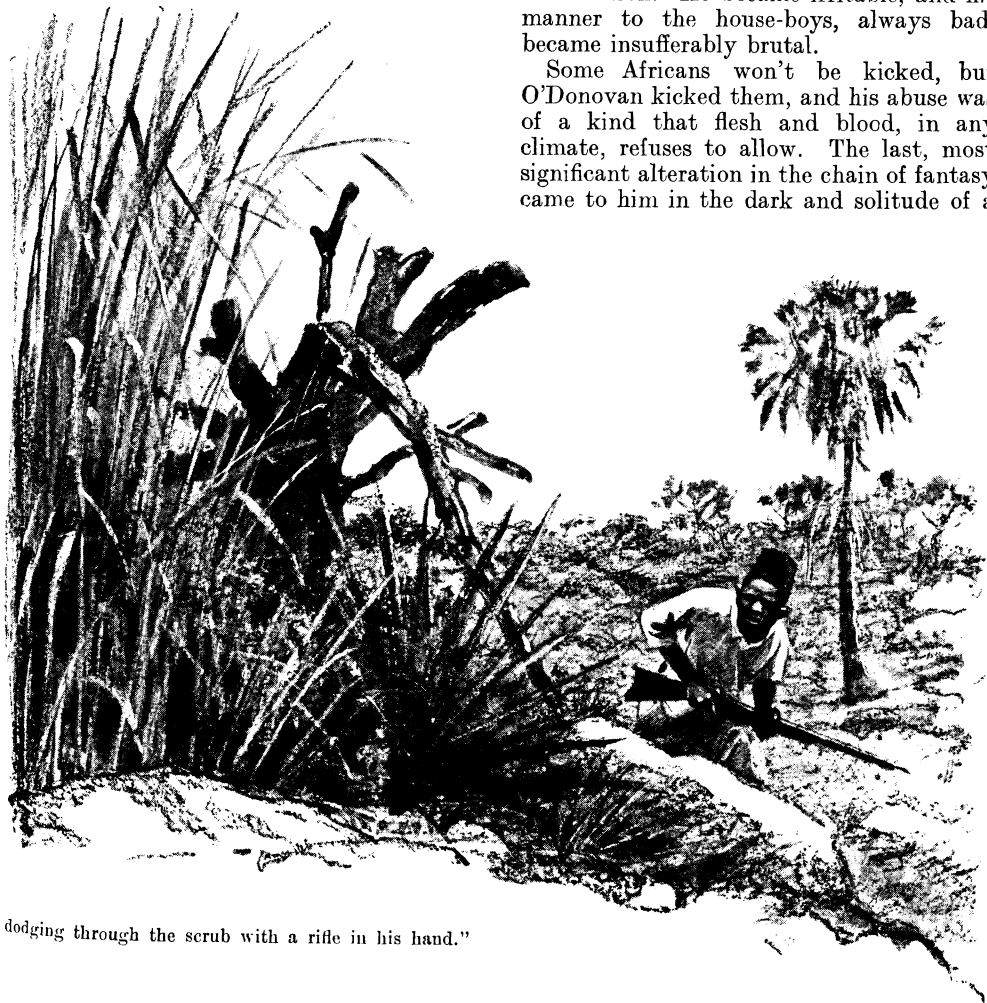
And the big pocket the other side of the boundary—with a strong gang he could have it cleaned up in a fortnight. The men he employed could not know exactly where the line passed; in the end, when the Mines people came to inspect, who would imagine that any hand other than Forsyth's had directed the working of the pocket? The elimination of Forsyth from the scheme of things became part of the growing day-dream.

think of, but the actual machinery that brought it about—of course that was absurdly impossible.

For a few days there was an interval. As he gazed idly at the monumental granite blocks, no new impossibilities came hopping through the open chambers of his mind, and the grey bamboos, in the evening light, had nothing to say.

During this time O'Donovan had a sensation of waiting, of being left in the lurch—of desertion. He became irritable, and his manner to the house-boys, always bad, became insufferably brutal.

Some Africans won't be kicked, but O'Donovan kicked them, and his abuse was of a kind that flesh and blood, in any climate, refuses to allow. The last, most significant alteration in the chain of fantasy came to him in the dark and solitude of a



dodging through the scrub with a rifle in his hand."

Soon a whole new set of scenes added themselves. In these O'Donovan had retired, wealthy and contented, to an infinite variety of pleasant experiences at home. Long, sleek, high-powered cars carried him to the theatre by night and the hunting-field by day.

It was all very easy and pleasant to

sleepless night. From an idle erection of crazy and immoral hypotheses the dream became perfectly possible and easy of translation into fact.

It was a matter of hours only before he took the first definite steps. With an absent, preoccupied air, whistling softly to himself, he turned out an old

"chop" box and discovered a dozen ball cartridges for his 12-bore shot-gun.

Of course, up in the crack of the granite kopjes there were said to be, shy and cunning, a few large and dangerous apes. As he handled the heavy ball cartridges, O'Donovan was thinking of them as much as of any other thing. Later, these stooping long-armed giants, black and hairy and grotesquely human, faded from his mind's disordered vision, and he began to see Forsyth's sun-helmet appearing and disappearing in the sunburnt scrub.

The distinctive change from day-dream to intention dated from that midnight hour when the utter improbability of the boulder plot began to weary him. It became tedious and silly. But an alternative sprang lightly into the vacant place.

Forsyth, like other bush dwellers, depended to some extent on his gun for meat. Forsyth's concession had some of the best bush-fowl and guinea-fowl country on its lonely west flank. Just opposite the patch of pagan civilisation birds were plentiful and the bush gave cover for approach.

Yes, and the pagans who tended the crops from time to time kept clear of the white man's ground. In that monotonous scrub a dead man might lie month after month.

And so O'Donovan took to wandering in the evenings across the boundary and out along the west side of Forsyth's claim. He found a good station and sat at ease, waiting. Before him the irregular growth of ragged tall grass and low twisted trees was varied only by occasional bamboos, where dried-up gullies marked the course of the rainy season rivulets. The ground sloped gently away.

O'Donovan dreamed on. He was conscious of no moral struggle. Ethics had ceased to have any meaning for him. He was alone in a world of plastic circumstance that it was his business to mould to his desire.

And the day came at last when Forsyth's khaki helmet shone in the light of the setting sun and disappeared again behind a thicket, exactly as O'Donovan had foreseen. He waited. Forsyth was coming towards him, working his way methodically around the mounds of native cultivation.

Something hurled O'Donovan violently to the ground. He heard a shot and a shout. He tried to rise, and then realised, in stupefied amazement, that the crashing blow on his chest was the impact of a

bullet. Spluttering and struggling in the dust, at last, as consciousness began to go, he felt a hand. Forsyth was bending over him.

Enough strength remained for a last struggle. Rage and curses spluttered from his lips, and he reached frantically for his gun. After that came a knife-like pain and a merciful unconsciousness.

Only Forsyth had seen O'Donovan's Coast boy dodging through the scrub with a rifle in his hand.

* * * * *

O'Donovan came to in a bed in Forsyth's camp, efficiently bandaged and alone.

Two days later he knew the facts. His boy Joseph had been caught and safely ironed, and Forsyth *knew*—knew that he was tending a would-be murderer.

They exchanged no words on the important subject, but several times a day Forsyth came and inspected the house-boy's work, saw that the sick-room requirements were fulfilled, and himself dressed the wound, until a Scotch doctor came.

O'Donovan mended well in spite of the pain in mind and body. For moments at a time, in his helpless weakness, he glimpsed events from a normal point of view. Then a fear and horror of what he had thought, and intended, crushed him down.

Out of the mists of memory began to grow a realisation of his own spiritual past—recognition of opportunities missed, of repeated, and then habitual, choice of the selfish end. Then thought again eluded his control, and an aimless drifting on the wayward currents of imagination filled the hours and dulled consciousness.

At times a sudden full realisation of his actual position overcame him, and he hated Forsyth—all the more for his magnanimous sick-room solicitude, his forbearing silence and unspoken forgiveness.

The very idea of forgiveness, instead of softening, infuriated O'Donovan. It widened a huge gulf between the wrong-doer and the righteous, left him a criminal and elevated Forsyth to a pinnacle of noble generosity.

At these times O'Donovan shut his eyes and quivered as a storm of rage and hate swept through him.

* * * * *

"You've no proof," said the doctor across the mess table. "None whatever. Listen to me a moment.

"You find O'Donovan shot in the lung by his own steward boy. He raves, curses

you, appears to reach for his gun—what does that show? Simply that he seemed to think it was you who fired the shot. As regards these later delirious sayings—well, personally I believe you're right. He was out gunning for you, but you've no evidence—nothing but suspicions. Take my advice and drop it."

"You heard yourself the other day——"

"I heard enough to believe you're right, but nothing to bring forward as evidence—a delirium can't be evidence. Drop it."

"He'll try again."

"You'll have to watch out. We must think of something. Have him watched—that's it—have him watched."

"A native spy?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I say!"

"Well, perhaps we can think of something better—I'm going to send him home a bit. After six months in England, perhaps he'll come back wiser."

"Oh, well, I don't like it, but I dare say you're right. *You* haven't got to live here."

"No." The doctor settled himself comfortably in his chair. "You're in a difficult position, Forsyth, that's a fact. We'll have to think it out."

"It's the motive," Forsyth complained. "If one could imagine a motive, it might help?"

"One can *imagine* lots of things."

"Tell me some."

"Well, it's guesswork, of course. You never met O'Donovan when he was at Juga?"

"No."

"Well, I've known him on and off for years. I remember when he first came out—a cheery, independent sort of man, but selfish. I should say decidedly selfish."

"It is three or four years since he took up this lease. That's a long time out here. He's never been home and he's lived alone in the bush, making money, of course—all alone—nothing to think of but himself and his affairs—not even a dog, and he doesn't get on well with the boys."

"Can't you imagine what would happen? How the man's values would get mixed up and go? Until the whole world, in a way, lacked reality, excepting that which directly concerned himself. A growing, centripetal tendency in all his thoughts until what he wanted was the only right and the only *thinkable* thing. You—I don't suppose he

thought much of you. There's that rich bit down by the boundary, better than any of his own—he would just want it, and go on inevitably to devise a means of taking it. You would be eliminated—that was the word he used—eliminated—just put out of the way."

"That's what we do to any animal that obstructs our progress. I don't suppose your existence was more real or more important to him than that of any other obstructive creature. A man can lose his sense of proportion. It's easy enough to guess. I could give you lots more. The important question is what is to be done now. I've told you what I think."

They got up and went out into the yard. Forsyth was irritable and dissatisfied. The doctor's detached and judicial manner brought little comfort.

Two round mud huts at the end of the yard were the sleeping quarters of Forsyth and O'Donovan. From one of these came the sudden crack of a shot. After an instant's blank surprise, both began to run.

The sick man had found the strength to crawl from door to door, and the problem was finally solved. Forsyth's heavy revolver lay by his hand, a bullet in his brain.

"It makes me feel bad," said Forsyth half an hour later. "He must have suffered a lot, but we did everything possible in the circumstances. I can't blame myself. Say something, doctor, for Heaven's sake! Don't sit there saying nothing."

But the doctor seemed oddly indisposed for conversation. He remained wrapped in a mantle of thought, while Forsyth fidgeted uneasily in his chair. Something had happened to the doctor's own sense of proportion, a change that held him physically inert while his mind responded and expanded to a sudden influx of understanding. The dead man explained, and the immediate confusion became clear.

Pathetically absurd was Forsyth's querulous seeking after self-justification. The one thing needful to have saved O'Donovan, the one unnoticed deficiency that would have transformed the whole unfortunate event, this they had lacked.

They had never liked the man, and O'Donovan's last lonely days, pain-racked and remorseful, with every medical aid, but destitute of sympathy and affection, became, in the light of the doctor's visionary mood, a stark, unalterable tragedy.



"Their lips touched."

THE KISSING TREE

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY BALLIOL SALMON

BETWEEN Lespard and Lostormel, and almost of an equal distance from the two, an old oak stands by the narrow roadside. The Lostormel guide-book, written and published by Mr. Pennycook, the stationer, calls it a "venerable oak"; but then the excellent Mr. Pennycook knows no better than to sacrifice his meaning for the sake of using a longer word.

"Venerable" is the last word one would care to use in connection with that tree. Old it is, indeed, but subtly suggestive of much wickedness. A debauched youth, one would say—forgetting that trees are but trees—and now a depraved old age. See the dark mass of it etched against a night sky, and you see the outline of a wicked old satyr crouching on goat's haunches and laughing—as the wind shakes him—at some memory of monumental naughtiness.

So thought Winyate, and he thought, too,

that it was quite the wrong sort of tree upon which a pleasant superstition ought to have been hung. But there is one attached to it, and it is called the Kissing Tree.

Let us see what Mr. Pennycook has to say about it.

"... stands a venerable oak which is called the Kissing Tree. It owes its name to a once popular belief that if a swain were able to entice the lass of his heart to the Kissing Tree on midsummer night, and there snatch a kiss of her, she could not help loving him ever afterwards. I need hardly add that free education and a broader outlook on life have done much among our young people to destroy the 'magic powers' of the old oak."

So much for Mr. Pennycook. He is too staid and respectable a person to execute a cellar-flap dance on the grave of Romance, but he seems more pleased than some of us at the broadening of the rustic mind.

Winyate found himself in Cornwall, searching in that home of legend for material to add to his forthcoming book on English folklore. He was staying in Lostormel, and, having read about the Kissing Tree in Mr. Pennycook's local guide-book, walked out to visit it. He found the tree, remarked its wicked aspect, and returned to Lostormel knowing no more about it than Mr. Pennycook had already told him.

Round about Lostormel the people are sensitive to the opinion of "foreigners from England." They laugh openly at the superstitions of their forebears, and would die rather than own to sharing them. They suspect the Anglo-Saxon of laughing at them in his sleeve for a set of ignorant bumpkins. Their past is a closed book, and they are careful never to open it with a stranger at their elbow.

Thus, when Winyate mentioned the tree in inns or to little groups of fishermen on the quayside, the men laughed and said that nobody believed in those old tales nowadays. And some whistled popular tunes not more than a year old, to show how modern they were.

So there was none to tell Winyate that pixies had planted the tree in the very old days, when "what with them and the giants, Cornwall wasn't hardly fit for human flesh." He did not know that old Uncle William couldn't have got Aunt Eliza—dead and gone now, poor dear—no other way than by takin' her to that old oak and kissin' her there on midsummer night. And her wouldn't have let him if she hadn't 'a' thought as midsummer night come in the middle of August; and when her did find out, it was too late, see!

The men, young and old, who whistled jazz tunes and went to the brand-new cinema, knew whom to visit if they wanted to ill-wish an enemy; they knew one or two of the "old people" who could charm warts or stop blood from flowing; and they knew better than to mention rabbits when they were out at sea; but they said nothing about these things to the London gentleman. Every stranger was a "London gentleman," even although he came from the uttermost parts of Yorkshire. And London gentlemen thought they knew everything and laughed at folks.

Winyate was tall and dark and so serious-looking that strangers sometimes gave him odd glances when he joked, as if this were the last thing that could be expected of such a man. A severe exterior masked a whimsical

soul which was nearly always happy and often frivolous. He was one of those whose cry was for a return to the simplicity of mediæval times. Had he been given his way, he would have raised the maypole in every village in England, and burned the product of every modern invention on one mighty dump. And of course, like everybody else, he drove cars, rode bicycles, and complained about the telephone service.

The Vicar of Lostormel, himself a Kentish man, who contrived to be popular with his flock without understanding it, found Winyate in his church one afternoon admiring the thirteenth-century font. A short chat was followed by an invitation to tea at the vicarage. The visitor remained to supper, and on until past midnight, talking and smoking, in a cosy, shabby, little book-lined room. In him the vicar found a spirit distantly akin to his own.

"And have the people really abandoned their old traditions?" Winyate asked.

"I think not entirely, although times are changing here as well as elsewhere. They are a strange, secretive people. I know nothing about their inner selves. The Wesleyan minister could tell you more than I. He is one of them, a Cornishman."

"Then he wouldn't talk."

"No," the vicar agreed thoughtfully, "he wouldn't talk."

"I wonder whether any of them still believe in the Kissing Tree?"

"My dear Mr. Winyate, if you want to discover that, why don't you go and see for yourself?"

"How?"

"Midsummer night is exactly a week from now. There is a barn opposite the old tree. Why not wait inside and see what happens?"

* * * * *

There was no moon that midsummer night, but the sky was cloudless and luminous, and dusted with stars. The parent winds were asleep, but little breezes, scarcely strong enough as yet to turn a leaf, were playing in the lanes. Spring was saying good-bye, handing her laden basket on to Summer; for midsummer night, coming as she does in June, has stolen the name of a night in August.


It is the night when all the fairy folk are said to regain their lost power. Winyate, wandering under the stars through the night-scented lanes towards the Kissing Tree, could well believe it. The rustling of



"The feeble flame was enough to show him a girl in blue."

little wild things in leafy banks was a scurry of elves surprised by a stranger's footfall. Brambles clutching at him were traps set by the same small people. The

gnarled trunks of trees took on elfin shapes and features. And now and then his face parted long strands of gossamer fresh from a fairy's spinning-wheel.



He reached the old tree at last, and found it as deserted as the shrine of some old god of a forgotten cult. No human thing was within sight or hearing, but he lingered some minutes, watching and listening, while he filled and lit a pipe. Then he turned abruptly to the left and entered Stygian darkness through the open door of the barn.

He walked cautiously, lest his shins should encounter some agricultural implement. An upturned ploughshare met suddenly in the dark is no friend of man. And, sure enough, his shoe collided with something hard which gave out a metallic ring. He stood still while he lit a match, and then stared hard at what lay at his feet. It was a woman's bicycle.

He lit another match, and, as he did so, he heard a little exclamation and a rustling of straw. The feeble flame was enough to show him a girl in blue leaning against the side of a wagon. Very small she was, and cast in a fairy mould, with eyes half laughing and half afraid, and

"'I beg your pardon,'
said Winyate."

the most whimsical little nose and mouth you could wish to see.

"I beg your pardon," said Winyate. "I didn't know fairies went in for cycling. How very modern of you!"

"We don't—only on midsummer night. Titania doesn't allow it. Now *she's* always scorching about on a tricycle whose wheels are buttercups. I don't think it's fair, do you?"

Winyate smiled broadly in the dark.

"Hush!" he said. "She might hear you. Do you know, Fairy, I have always longed to meet you."

"But you've never seen me before, Mortal."

"Oh, yes, I have. You are the naughty fairy—the one who wasn't invited to my christening. The others had given me a merry heart, but you sent me through the world with a solemn face. Can't you do anything about it?"

He heard her laugh softly in the gloom.

"Not now, I'm afraid. It's much too late. I'm sorry. Your parents ought to have been more careful with their invitations."

"I thought, if you'd just wave your wand—"

"I can't. I left it behind under the mushroom where I live. Still, as you've got a merry heart, you oughtn't to mind."

"I don't—much. How do they call you, Fairy?"

She hesitated and then said: "Helen."

He bowed. "Of course, I ought to have known. 'The face that launched a thousand ships, and fired the topmost towers of Ilium.' Helen, you shouldn't have left that wand behind. I'm disappointed in you."

"And I'm disappointed in *you*."

He frowned severely. Now that his eyes were used to the darkness, he could see her almost distinctly.

"Disappointed in me! Just when I thought I was being bright and amusing and making such a hit! Really, some of you fairies! What *did* you expect?"

"I thought you were going to meet somebody under that tree. I was watching you while you waited."

He gave vent to a little gusty laugh.

"I'm so sorry. We are here with the same purpose. I've walked from Lostormel in the hope of finding one couple so old-fashioned as to follow the old tradition."

"And I've cycled over from Lespard. Poor old tree! Nobody cares a jot for him now, poor dear!"

"He's a wicked old tree," said Winyate. "Look at him."

"Oh, no, no! He's queer, but he isn't wicked."

"Isn't he? Look at all the mischief he's done!"

"Is it mischievous to make people fall in love?"

"Of course it is. Perhaps that's why people avoid him now. They're getting too wise."

There was a short pause.

"I can see," she said, "that I'm going to hate you!"

He smiled to himself, his tongue in his cheek.

"It's true. Even down here the young couples don't waste their time wandering through the lanes to visit magic trees. Why should they, when they can go and see living pictures of some toothy actress. Jazz bands have drowned the pipes of Pan; free education and cheap literature have killed that stupid fellow Superstition. That bore Simplicity has just been carried to his grave. Even Love has been winged, pierced by an arrow sharper than his own. You're an anachronism, Fairy Helen. Go back to the place whence you came, hide under a leaf, and sleep your way through immortality."

He did not believe what he was saying. He spoke for the sake of making her cry out against him. Instead she came to him and looked up almost tearfully into his face.

"Oh, no," she said, "you don't mean that. I know you don't mean it! There is Beauty left, and Love, and all the other lovely things. Only—one has to search. Gold is buried deeper now than it used to be. It would be impossible for anyone to live in such a world as you pretend this one is rapidly becoming. Why, I don't believe the stars would look down upon such a place!"

"The people of to-morrow will be able to manage without the stars."

She uttered the little laugh of a child half angry at being teased.

"Oh, you're horrible!" she said. "And you don't mean it, otherwise you wouldn't be here. Say you don't mean it!"

He threw back his head and laughed.

"Have I at last met one of my own kind?" he cried. "No, I don't mean it—not all of it. Magic? Of course there's magic. By what other power were we brought here to talk nonsense to each other

on such a night as this? The world's all right while it contains two people like ourselves."

"Egotist!" she laughed.

"Of course, and so are you. We want everybody to be like ourselves. And we don't like it because a few bumpkins haven't come to kiss under this silly old tree."

"Poor old tree!"

"Wicked old tree! Look at him! Serve him right!"

"Even if he's wicked, I'm sorry for him. He's so lonely to-night. 'The unlit shrine is not so lonely as one the old fire forgets to touch.'"

"Well," said Winyate, "he's no right to be lonely to-night. Are we not here, keeping vigil with him?"

"Yes, but——"

She stopped suddenly short. Glancing sidelong at her, he saw that her face was averted.

"But we," he finished for her, "are not his devotees. There is his magic waiting for us, and we won't take it—because of what Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Robinson would say if they knew. Isn't that it? Yes, you were right—poor, lonely old tree!"

His hand linked itself in her arm, but she twisted herself free.

"Oh," she cried, "I don't know you! It isn't as if we——"

"You don't know me? When all the wisest heads in Fairyland conspired to bring us together this same blessed night! Don't you know that you and I have swum seas and climbed mountains through the ages to meet each other here at this moment?"

"Oh," she cried almost plaintively, "you're talking nonsense!"

"And isn't this a night for nonsense—glorious nonsense? Come to the tree, Helen, the poor, wicked, lonely old tree whom nobody cares for now. Deep in his bole he'll think us rustic lovers, and be happy for one more year."

She let him lead her out into the starlight, and the shadows of the tree embraced them both. There she hung her head for a long moment and whispered:

"It's only because—*somebody* ought to do this!"

"The old tree keeps his secrets," Winyate whispered, dropping light hands upon her shoulders.

Suddenly she lifted her little face, warm and half shamed and fragrant. Their lips touched, and for a little moment her cheek

rested against his. Then she drew back and stared at him round-eyed, half laughing, half afraid.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "suppose the magic really works?"

"I've a worse fear than that," he whispered.

"What?"

"Suppose it doesn't?"

She laughed softly to herself.

"You'd better hope it doesn't. You wouldn't like me a bit if you really knew me. I'm not a bit like this—always."

He laughed out aloud.

"I, too," he said, "have so far managed to avoid being certified. But on midsummer night——"

"But I'm different from what you think. Do you know I play hockey and bridge?"

"Not both at once, I hope."

"Oh, foolish one! Won't you let me tell you? Not that it matters, for in another minute I am going to say good night and—farewell."

"Not farewell!" he begged.

"How could I face you again, do you think? There are a lot of girls in the world. Even if you wanted to find me——"

He took her hands.

"Helen, you mustn't go like that—after we've found each other. We ought to have the chance of knowing one another. Suppose, after all, strange forces are at work to-night. Suppose our meeting here is something more than chance. My name is Winyate, and I am staying at 'The Ship' in Lostormel." He bent low, so that her soft hair brushed his brows. "Won't you tell me—the name you are known by—outside Fairyland?"

She hesitated for long moments.

"I'm staying at Lespard. My full name——"

She stopped suddenly and jerked him by the sleeve. He was aware all at once of footfalls and voices. A rustic man and girl were coming down the lane with the slow, desultory gait of lovers.

Without a word Winyate began to cross the road on tiptoe. She followed him as silently, and quickly enough to precede him through the open doorway. In the darkness within they watched and waited, and saw two shadowy figures pass and linger a moment under the old tree. They heard the sound of a kiss, and then a girl's voice uplifted.

"Aw, Tom, 'tes the old tree and mid-summer night. What have 'ee done?"

Winyate turned to the girl beside him. There was laughter in the eyes of both of them. Very softly he clapped his hands.

"That's good!" he whispered. "That's good! The old tree! There are others besides us!"

Then he took her by the hands and drew her gently to him.

WANDERING FLAMES.

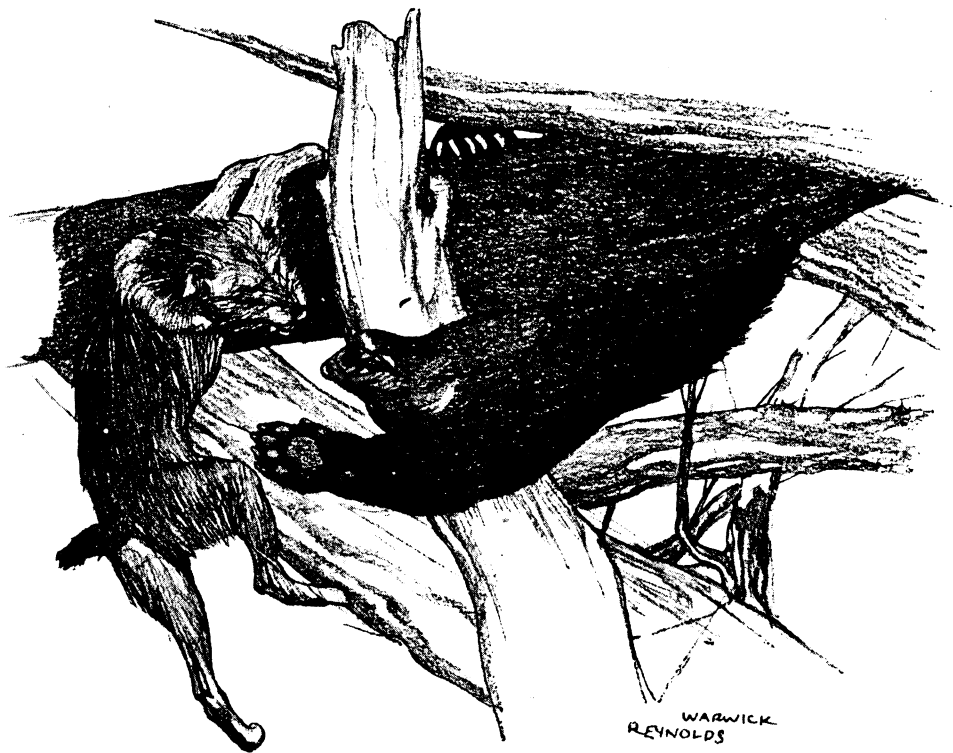
ATHWART the swamp, across the ling,
 Athwart the frozen mire,
 'Tis I go out stick-gathering
 To feed my day's first fire,
 Swift flame of furze,
 Slow fuel of oak,
 Bright blaze of blackthorn tree.
 And red glows the willow by its moss-green pillow
 As the wandering heart in me.

The sapling oaks with tattered rags
 Still hanging sere and dry,
 Gnarled roots of quags and blackthorn snags,
 A-snatch as I trapse by:
 Oh, sweet's the smoke
 Of gorse and oak
 And the sap of the black sloe-tree!
 And the withen rhind breathes sweet in the wind,
 As the wandering songs in me.

If torn my gown, and my numbed hands
 With blood own many a smear,
 And smirch and stain of burnt furze brands,
 As my face with the starting tear:
 Athwart the grass,
 Athwart the ling,
 Through bramble, brake, and briar,
 When I go forth stick-gathering
 To feed my day's last fire:

My God above, light Thou my road
 With flame of love new-born,
 So shrink I ne'er from spur nor goad
 Nor festering wound of thorn—
 Till buds the furze,
 And leafs the oak,
 And blooms the blackthorn tree,
 And red burns the willow by its moss-green pillow
 As the wandering blood in me.

Alice E. GILLINGTON.



"The wolverene swung to the under-side of her log, sloth fashion, and reached down for him."

THE GLUTTON

By HAL G. EVARTS

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

THE Piegans foraged a precarious living from season to season, subsisting on grasshoppers and dried berries in the main. Perhaps it was their continual struggle for food which led them to name the wolverene Ipewang. Literally, this name applied to a species of violent cramp which sometimes seized upon a greedy Piegan when, after a protracted fast, he stumbled upon food in plenty and overloaded his system therewith. Hence the Piegan belief that though all must eat to live, a certain high percentage would eat to die—a belief with a foundation in truth, in view of the fact that the great majority of Piegans were summoned to Manitou through the medium of Ipewang. It is seemingly inconsistent that a tribe whose vital problem

in life was scarcity of food should die out from overeating.

The white men named the beast the glutton, for although most animals eat only to live, it was early observed that the wolverene apparently lived only to eat. Thus the white men, by a similar line of reasoning, had bestowed a title of similar meaning, justifying the aptness of Piegan nomenclature. Yet there was a slightly different significance in the names.

Hedrick knew the Piegans' name for the glutton, but its significance was lost in the hazy past, for the Piegans were gone from the hills. As there had been seeming inconsistency in the old legend that a tribe whose chief obstacle to survival lay in scarcity of food should eventually die off from over-

eating, so Hedrick in his day found in the wolverene what was apparently the only inconsistency in the intricate scheme of Nature as he knew it.

Hedrick knew the signs of the forest floor as the city dweller knows his neighbourhood—better, perhaps, for he had unravelled the intimate family secrets of all the folk in his domain. He had studied their vices and virtues, their strength and limitations, and on his long, solitary rounds of the trap line he had woven these various traits into a pattern that blended perfectly. Not content to know the fact of a habit alone without learning, too, its significance, he had ferreted out the bearing of each one upon the general plan of balance so evident in Nature.

He had long since classified the glutton among the killers whom Nature intended to hold in check the surplus of other tribes, not only of the preyed-upon species, but also of the lesser killers. He knew the limitations of many beasts of prey, certain weaknesses imposed upon them lest they should kill too freely. It was very apparent that the tribe of Ipewang had its limitation which held in check the increase of wolverenes, and therein lay the mystery. Hedrick could not determine the source or character of that limitation. He found his usual line of reasoning reversed. Given a fact at the source, he reasoned forward and sought its purpose in the scheme of things. Here he had the reason, the fact itself, and sought to backtrack to the source.

The reason for the scarcity of wolverenes was self-evident, having the same meaning in the general plan as the scarcity of other ruthless slayers—that they might not kill too abundantly. The fact of the limitation, too, was apparent. A she wolverene brought forth from three to five young each year, yet their numbers were few in the hills. It was the source of the fact that eluded him. The gluttons had no natural enemies to deplete their ranks, for even the cougar, bloody prince of killers, had not the courage to pounce upon Ipewang. So, out of all Nature, Hedrick had found the one seeming inconsistency which he could not unravel. It was only when he discovered for himself that slight difference in significance between the meaning of Ipewang and glutton—the Piegans' name and that bestowed by the whites—that he struck the trail to solution and the final truth that there is no such thing as inconsistency in Nature.

Hedrick rambled one spring a dozen miles

from his cabin, his Airedale scouting the timber along the line of march. The dog disappeared and his master saw no more of him. This premature departure of the Airedale from the face of the earth was linked in the mind of Ipewang, the young glutton, with his own first appearance upon it. As a matter of fact, he had been born into the world some two months before the Airedale departed from it, but his mother's fight with the big dog was the first event of sufficient vividness to make a lasting impression upon his none too retentive memory.

Ipewang had first looked upon the world from the depths of a mighty log jam. A tangled jungle of spruce clothed an abrupt slope that swept up to the rock rubble piled at the base of ragged cliffs which lifted above timber line. The wind had scoured the heavy snows from the open sheep meadows high above, sifting it over the edge of the cliffs. Where the gales had hurtled over the brink there had been an undercurling backlash which had fashioned vast snow combs that hung far out over the cap rocks of the rims. Below, in the precipitous gulches that furrowed the face of the cliffs, the white stuff was piled to a depth of ten feet, clinging precariously to the steep slopes and waiting only for a slight jar to dislodge it.

In midwinter some hundreds of tons fell from the snow comb and struck the funnel-shaped gulch below. The whole mass started, carrying all loose rock in its rush. The avalanche poured from the mouth of the funnel and struck the timber on a fifty-yard front with ten thousand tons of weight behind its drive. The dense stand of spruce was sheared away as so much straw, and the catapulting mass bored on down the incline. After three hundred yards its impetus was dissipated by the flaring out of the slope to a less precipitous angle. A bare slide trail marked the course of the run, and at its lower extremity the *débris* was piled in a mighty tangle of logs and rock, the crevices chinked with snow.

Ipewang was born in the dim interior of this massive pile while the drifts still lay deep on the slope. Even in midsummer the rays of the sun seldom penetrated to the heart of this north slope to suck up the moisture, and, as a consequence, the drifts lingered till late summer, not wholly disappearing before fall snows started once more building them up. Ipewang's world seemed one of humidity. The dim lanes beneath the slide pile were damp, rank with

the odour of rotting logs where ricks of ancient blow-downs had been gathered up in the slide. Tons of old snow still lingered in the heart of the sheltered mass and trickled down through the whole of it.

The young glutton's range had heretofore been limited to a restricted stretch of the side-hill where, with three brothers and sisters, he had followed the old wolverene on short jaunts. The outside world seemed almost as moist and gloomy as the slide pile, the tops of the spruce roofing it over, the forest floor littered with continuous jams of windfalls, and the slope a series of seeping side-hill bogs. But all this was to his liking, and throughout his life he would choose just such high-country jungles for his hunting ground.

Prior to a certain day in late spring Ipewang knew nothing of battle save through the clashes staged daily within the ranks of his own family. He belonged to the largest of the weasels, and when he fought he entered the fray with true weasel ferocity. There was no mimicry or play in the youthful combats between brother and sister in the tribe of Ipewang.

The she wolverene had brought home the body of a marmot, and the four young gluttons had promptly torn it apart, each one making off to some different part of the jam to eat his share. Ipewang finished his portion shortly and craved more. Near the lower extremity of the jam a sister still struggled with a last tough scrap of hide. Ipewang made for her and seized the food. His sister grappled him savagely and drove her tiny teeth in his neck, then transferred her grip to the strip of hide and wrenched the main part of it from him. As he attempted to gulp down the portion he had retained, a third young pirate appeared on the scene and engaged in battle with the sister over the fragment that remained.

Ipewang had drawn near the edge of the jam, and he now wandered a few yards farther, clearing the main bulk of the pile and coming out into territory where the logs overhead were scattering, piled loosely to a depth of some five feet, with two-foot gaps between.

Five minutes before, a man had passed a few hundred yards down wind. The big Airedale that followed the same general direction as his master, even while foraging far to either side, had suddenly come to a full halt, one forefoot uplifted, his muzzle quivering eagerly as he sampled the currents of the air. A hot scent drifted down the

slope, a scent that was strange to him, but which he knew emanated from some beast of prey, and he traced it up wind.

The Airedale was a silent trailer, and he neared the slide pile without a sound to apprise his intended prey of his coming. When he reached the jam the scent was hot in his nostrils, apparently permeating the whole neighbourhood. He was a veteran of many battles, and far too wise to dart into the gloomy mazes of the jam before determining the character of his prey. He leaped upon a log and followed its length, turned off upon another and gradually mounted the structure, his hackle hair bristling into a roach along his spine as the reeking odour of the gluttons' den grew stronger in his nostrils. When some twenty yards from the edge of the slide pile, he followed a log six feet above the ground. A movement caught his eye, a waddling creature a third his size, and he bounced from his log to a lower one, then to the next, gained the ground and slid between two trunks to pounce upon Ipewang. As he struck he gave voice to the first sound he had made in the course of the hunt—a savage, fighting bellow.

The young wolverene had no knowledge of enemies outside those in his own family; but fear, the portion of most animals, played no part in the glutton's make-up. Some bellowing beast rushed him, and he met it with bared teeth, only to be smothered beneath his opponent's weight. Two rows of teeth closed down on him and he was jerked violently to and fro as the great dog shook him. The Airedale did not feel the flattening of his victim, such as was ordinarily the case when his jaws crushed together on prey of similar size. Instead, his teeth met the swelling resistance of iron flesh, for Ipewang, young as he was, possessed sinews that gave promise of tremendous power at maturity, and already his strength was probably three times that of any creature in the wild of similar age and size. He writhed round in his hide and fastened on his antagonist's cheek. A savage shake broke his hold and he was thrown against a log. The Airedale struck again, then dropped his victim and turned to fight for his life.

His first bellow and Ipewang's savage snarls had galvanised the old glutton into action, and the dog now saw a sinister beast heading for him from the depths of the log jam. The dog came from a line of fighting forebears, and there was no fear in him. He had run with a bear pack, and more than once had helped to kill a black or brown

bear on the ground before the animal could take to tree. Twice he had tackled a bear single-handed and kept the beast bayed till his master reached the scene. He had silently trailed a mountain lion till close upon the tawny killer, when his sudden frenzied rush had startled the cougar into hurriedly mounting the nearest tree, where the dog had held him till a ball from Hedrick's rifle brought the big cat down from its lofty perch. But he had never encountered the sort of beast that moved on him now. He could not know that her muscles were as springy as seasoned wood; that she could shove aside a rock or a log that a strong man could not move without aid of leverage; or that her jaws were capable of cracking the leg bones of a big-horn sheep to expose the marrow that lay within.

He struck for her neck, but the glutton failed even to flinch. Instead, she met his driving fangs and reached out for him even as he slashed at her. The forelegs clamped on his shoulders, and at their first contraction he felt as if his chest was being crushed in a press. The thing that had seized him paid no heed to his slicing teeth, but strove only to hold him while her own fangs sought his throat.

The dog knew with this first clash that he could not meet his enemy at grips. His tactics here would have to be those he employed on bear—open fighting, where he could dart in and strike, biting the beast and holding her at bay without coming to close quarters, till his master arrived on the scene. A lucky wrench broke her hold, and he bounced upon a log three feet above, then to the next as the wolverene followed him.

He reached a fallen trunk six feet above ground, and here he made a fatal mistake in judgment. Instead of moving down to clear the edge of the jam, he turned toward its top to keep above his enemy, running from one log to the next, the glutton following with grim purpose. Twice he turned to face his pursuer with gleaming fangs exposed, but this array occasioned not even a pause in the rush of the old wolverene, her sole purpose in life that of coming to grips with this beast that had dared invade her lair. Ipewang, shaken and bruised, followed doggedly behind his mother, raging to grapple once more with the creature that had mauled him.

Log by log the old glutton held tenaciously after the Airedale. He attained a height of forty feet above the ground as he mounted higher up the side of the great log jam.

Throughout the fight he had kept up a frenzied outcry which would serve to guide his master to the spot; but Hedrick had rounded the shoulder of a spur, and the sounds of conflict failed to reach his ears. The dog gained the top of the slide pile. The ground was eighty feet below him through a crazy latticework of logs, on all sides of him a sea of tangled tree trunks for a hundred yards each way.

As he leaped a break between two slanting trunks the wolverene's claws scored his rump, and he missed his distance, falling to a log some three feet below and holding by his forelegs. This hold, too, he relinquished as the wolverene swung to the under-side of her log, sloth fashion, and reached down for him. He landed on a platform six feet below, and his enemy plunged after him. There was no doubt as to the outcome now. Down in the breaks of the log jam the wolverene could operate with the agility of an ape.

The dog bounced from log to log, attempting to regain the top, but steadily losing ground in his doublings to avoid the wolverene. She closed with him, and the Airedale whirled to fight. They fell to a platform of trunks six feet below, rolled from this to glance from a slanting log and slam solidly down across another, a whirling, frenzied pair locked in a death grip. Only once did the glutton lose her hold, and that but for the fraction of a second. They were well down in the interior of the slide pile, where the logs were close packed, the gaps between them lessening with each downward slip of the fighting pair, the light of day almost obscured by the tangled trunks above. And Ipewang, bruised and limping crazily, but actuated by the same purpose that swayed his mother, reached the top of the log pile and dipped down toward the sounds of the fight below.

Late in the afternoon of the following day Ipewang was feasting on dog meat, when a strange scent drifted to him through the crevices of his home. It was meat scent, but of a kind strange to him, an odour strong enough to penetrate the scent of dog meat with which his nostrils were filled. The creature must be just outside. Ipewang moved toward the edge of the jam, but a sweep of his mother's forepaw slammed him against a log. The low growl that accompanied this admonitory pat warned him to remain within. Next he heard sounds as the intruder moved from log to log at the lower extremity of the pile.

Hedrick had taken up the trail of his missing companion, swinging wide of his own route of the preceding day till he reached a point where old drifts testified to the fact that the Airedale had ceased to flank his way. He doubled back and at last found dog tracks crossing a drift in a sheltered gulch. The tracks pointed up the slope, showing that here the dog had turned and headed off at right angles to his master's course. He patiently worked out the trail, losing it between patches of drifts and swinging off to examine the surface of every old snow-bank along his route with the hope of picking it up once more.

At last he reached the giant mass of logs and *débris* piled by the avalanche, and knew he had reached the end of the trail. The tracks of young gluttons were scattered about in soft spots near its edge, and he knew that somewhere within was the den of a she wolverene. Back in the depths of that log jam the glutton family feasted on the carcase of his dog. Hedrick mounted the pile, examining every inch of the way minutely, trying to piece together the details of the fight.

Ipewang listened to the sounds of his progress, inhaling deeply of the scent that filtered through to him. Soon now his mother would work up through the jam and seize this creature. Then there would be meat in plenty. He growled softly in anticipation of the coming fight, and a swift slash of his mother's teeth counselled him to remain silent. Gradually it came to him that the beast outside was one that his savage parent wished to avoid. This was the first time that caution came to him. The furtive silence of the old glutton was evidence that the thing outside was her master in savagery. For an hour the hot body scent seeped through the log jam, then it cooled, but the trail scent lingered and permeated the entire vicinity for another space of hours.

Ipewang's dislike for this odour deepened, linked in his mind with some fearsome unknown beast that was more than a match for the savage old glutton who was his mother, and so, by natural consequence, was bad medicine for all wolverenes. He had forgotten the occurrence within an hour after the last of the man-scent had been blotted out, yet it was inevitable that whenever a whiff of that scent drifted to him in the future, it would quicken old impressions and rouse caution within him.

The old glutton deserted the lair that

had been found by man, knowing the latter's power for harm. The four kits followed forth in her wake, and the family travelled far during the night. Ipewang knew no home thereafter, but became a wanderer through the hills. There was no regularity to his travels, for his tribe lacks that quality so evident in most other animals that leads toward fixity of habit in all that pertains to their daily lives.

The elk and deer feed mainly in the early morning hours or at dusk, bedding in the heavy timber during the heat of day. The bulls and bucks summer high above the cows and does of their species. The big-horn ram summers on the shady face of ledges below the high meadows where his ewes and lambs remain. The beaver rarely travels a mile from his home colony, though both mink and otter travel endlessly; these latter species have established routes. Whenever the banks of a stream are marked by the tracks of a travelling group of otters or mink, it is certain that they will come that way again, the interval varying according to the extent of their chosen range. Thus men who follow the meat trail of the trap line are enabled to predict with fair certainty what to expect from each species. But no man may surmise what the wolverene will do next.

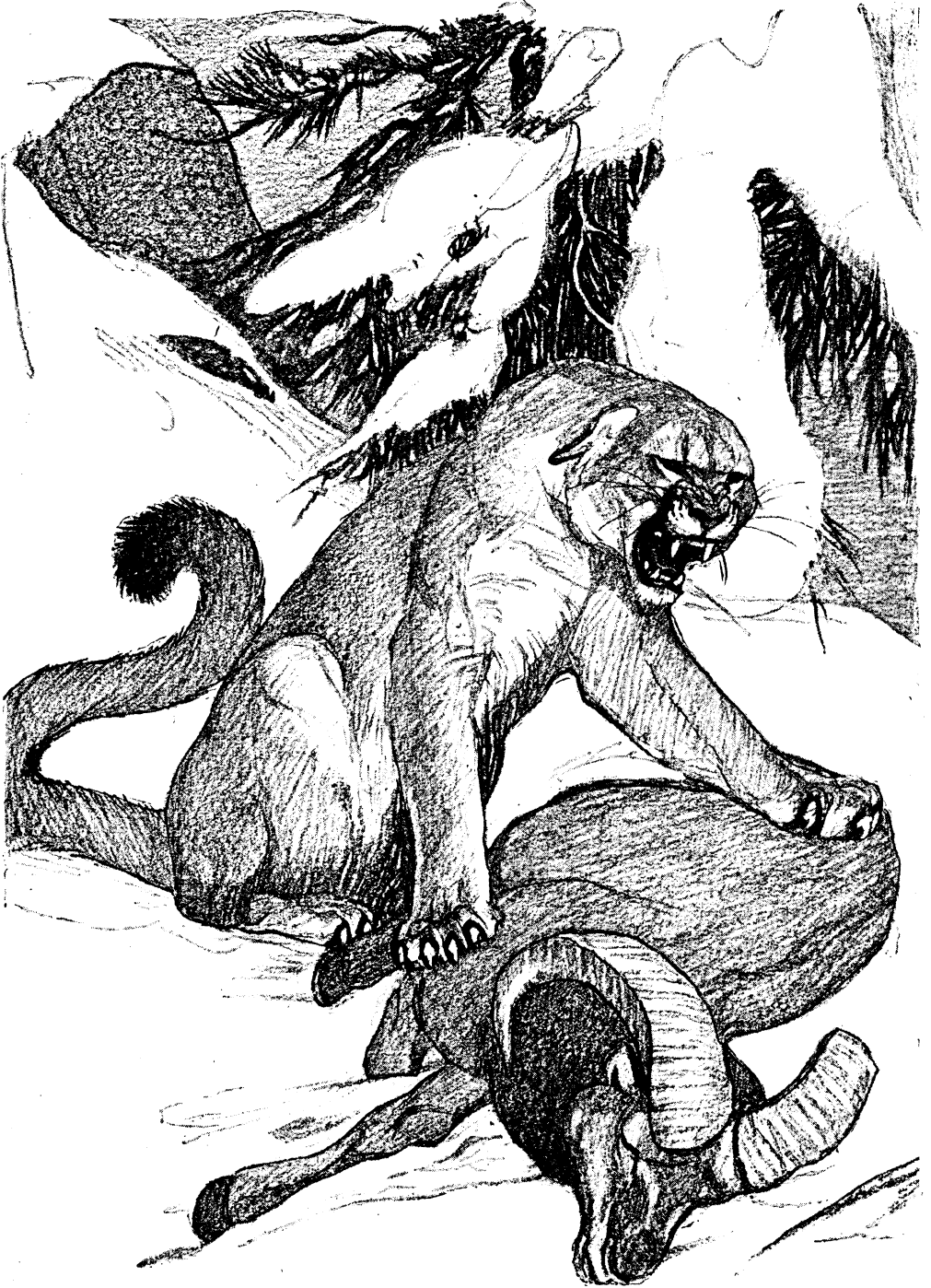
Ipewang followed his mother through a country, part of which he would never see again, though other parts of it he later revisited; yet this crossing of old trails was always through accident, never once actuated by the homing instinct that dominates most other animals.

Their wanderings were irregular, influenced entirely by present conditions. For a week at a time Ipewang's mother would travel endlessly, then perhaps linger in one spot where the abandoned kill of a cougar furnished ample food supply, or where the marmots were especially plentiful in the rock slides. Only in one particular did the old glutton subscribe to regularity—the character of the country over which she travelled was always of the same sort. She prowled the heavily-timbered slopes littered with blow-downs, and investigated the deep gorges that rent the hills near timber line, their bottoms strewn with mighty heaps of *débris* carried down by avalanche slides and piled with boulders torn from the cliffs above.

Fall snows spread their white layers deep across the hills. Winter tightened down and sent the squirrels to their hollows,

the marmots to their burrows beneath the rock slides, and the bears to their winter dens. Meat was scarce in the hills, and Ipe-

wang experienced his first days of actual famine. Occasionally the carcass of a winter-killed elk supplied the gluttons with a



"He lifted his jaws from the feed, and his face writhed into a frightful, snarling mask."

WARWICK
REYNOLDS

banquet, but the lean spells between such finds grew increasingly frequent.

After a three-day fast Ipewang's mother lifted her nose to sample the wind, and traced the ribbon of scent to a hot trail in the snow. The creature had left a line of most peculiar tracks. The drag of a heavy paunch grooved the snow, and each foot seemed to have described a quarter circle on the surface before having been planted firmly. The beast toed in, the swing of one foot circling past and overlapping the curved mark left by the off-side paw. The old glutton followed this fanciful scrollwork, the most distinctive trail of all the open, and presently overtook a queer beast that waddled awkwardly across the snow.

The live-meat scent maddened Ipewang, and he rushed the creature from which it emanated. A sweeping blow from his mother's paw turned him aside from the porcupine. The animal had halted, and was apparently unalarmed by the proximity of its

enemies. The old wolverene wasted no time in preliminary manoeuvring, but made straight for the porcupine, quartering in from the front to avoid the murderous tail clothed with a thousand barbed shafts. She thrust a paw under her quarry and turned the hedgehog on its back, while she made three slashes at the unprotected belly, then leaped away while the hedgehog twitched spasmodically in its death-throes. But she had not escaped unscathed. Her paws and forelegs had been pierced by a dozen quills, a like number were embedded in the roof of her mouth, while one cheek bristled with a mass of the deadly little shafts. She fought these clinging things with the same ferocity she displayed toward a living antagonist, clawing her cheek to rake out the quills, then seized a two-inch limb and chewed it to grind down the barbs in her mouth. Some of these were driven deep before the protruding quills broke off and left the points embedded in the flesh.

Ipewang had rushed in to worry the dead porcupine, and a score of quills were driven home in his jaws from the force of his open-mouthed lunge. He fought them as his mother did, snarling as he worked, and a bloodstained froth dripped from his jaws. The old glutton cautiously ripped the



"The glutton advanced into the open."

porcupine's underparts with a slash of her claws, forced the edges back, and opened the animal up so that all might feed. It was sheer agony for Ipewang to use his jaws to tear off a mouthful of hot meat, but he persisted and secured his full share of the feast. Throughout the remainder of the winter Ipewang was afflicted at all times by the agony of porcupine quills embedded in his anatomy. Old points, their shafts broken off, journeyed through his flesh, to fester and come out at some other spot, leaving a dull ache throughout his body, a condition that never varied except by the accession of live darting flames occasioned by fresh quills gained in each new encounter. Twice the old wolverene bungled her attack, and was treated to a vicious slap of the fiendish tail, which drove a hundred barbed shafts into her shoulder and side.

Winter waned and hot winds gave promise of approaching spring. The squirrels came from the hollow trees, the marmots from their burrows, and Ipewang's family once more found good hunting in the hills. Then one day his mother stopped and sprawled in the snow. In an hour she was dead. Ten days later one of Ipewang's sisters died in her tracks of the same strange malady.

Almost another year elapsed before Ipewang once more entered Hedrick's trapping territory. He was now a full-grown wolverene, tremendously powerful. His outlook on life was one of stark ferocity. He went his way and turned aside for no creature in the hills, and the wild things feared him. The markings of the glutton were eccentric, and Hedrick had arrived at the fanciful conclusion that this striking colour scheme had been bestowed upon the wolverene so that no other beast might mistake his coming. Even though the wind was wrong and the message of his approach failed to travel ahead of him to the noses of those along his route, they had need of but one brief sight of him to determine his identity. His long fur was dark brown, almost black, and a broad yellowish stripe travelled along each side to meet at the base of the bushy tail. This striking pattern had gained him the sobriquet of skunk bear among many of the trappers.

Ipewang had subsisted largely upon porcupine meat for a month prior to his entering Hedrick's range, and the fever of the quills racked him. He stopped to nose the wind as a faint scent of other meat

reached him. He worked out the scent, and found a dead marten dangling from the trunk of a spruce, gripped fast in a trap, and he tore the little animal from the steel contrivance and made a meal of it. A beaten trail led away through the timber, padded solidly across the drifts by Hedrick's webs on many rounds of the trap line. Ipewang followed this easy trail, and within a mile found a white weasel fast in a trap. His tiny kinsman flashed at him with open mouth and fastened on his throat; but Ipewang crushed him down with a forepaw, and one crunch of his jaws reduced the weasel to a pulp, and the slender body went to join the luckless marten. At two other points along the trail the wolverene found meat-eating birds snared in marten traps, and he added these morsels to the rest. Next he found a pine squirrel fastened to the trunk of a mighty spruce some six feet above the snow. A slanting log led up to a point a foot below the squirrel, affording an easy route of access to the food.

Ipewang moved up the log and planted a forefoot on the flat top of it, then fell from the perch in a fighting frenzy as something gripped his toes with a lightning snap. He slapped at everything within reach of his free foot as he dangled at the end of the trap chain. His hind feet secured a hold on the trunk, and he arched his back for one mighty wrench, and snapped the light chain like so much twine. Ipewang fought the vicious little contraption on his foot with the same desperation he would have brought into play against a living enemy. His teeth ground savagely against the cold steel, but to no avail.

At last he planted his free foot firmly upon the trap to hold it down while he pulled with the trapped member. The protruding spring made an excellent foothold. His first powerful downward thrust flattened the spring, and the tug of the trapped paw released it from the loosened jaws of the trap. Thus, by accident, he had opened the trap. Otherwise he would have broken it, for the little marten trap was not built to hold for long a beast of Ipewang's sort. He mounted the log once more and ate the squirrel, then followed on down the web trail.

A faint elusive scent clung to certain sections of his route and occasioned him slight uneasiness. This scent came from the one creature of all the wild that outranked the wolverene in prowess. Ipewang did not know the source of this knowledge. Never-

theless, the man-scent constituted a menace. He had no recollection of that time long past when his mother, who had slain the big Airedale and who attacked all comers, had remained in hiding in the slide pile while some creature prowled outside—a creature with the same scent that reached him now. His memory was not so retentive as that, yet the impression had lingered, and now quickened to life with a renewal of the man-scent. Perhaps it had to do with this thing that had gripped his foot. If this were all, then he had little to fear, for the pain of the trap had been slight as compared with the hot quills of the porcupines he had slain.

He held on down the trail and raided five miles of Hedrick's trap line. Three times a marten trap pinched his foot without securing a fair hold, and a single jerk of his mighty foreleg freed him. The traps were small and not built to close fairly upon so large a paw as Ipewang's, except when his toes were planted exactly in the most favourable manner. A fourth trap clamped his toes, and there followed another fight, a second broken trap chain, and eventually he freed himself as before.

The snowshoe trail turned down country, and Ipewang left it and ascended to a wild gorge near the timber line. His trail led him out across the peaks and the sheep meadows and down into a rent in the opposite slope of the divide. For no reason whatever he took his track back across the divide to the gorge. A wandering cougar had entered the pocket during his absence and surprised a big-horn ram that had descended a snow-covered rock slide. The hot-blood scent of a fresh kill reached Ipewang, and he turned and headed up wind.

The lion had just commenced his feast when the movement in a patch of timber-line spruce caught his eye. He lifted his jaws from the feed, and his face writhed into a frightful, snarling mask as the glutton advanced into the open. The big cat was the prince of slayers. He could strike down the mightiest bull elk on the run, but he had no stomach for coming to grips with the beast that neared him now. He might defeat the wolverene, but once the fight was started, there would be no victory till the last spark of life was gone from Ipewang's body.

The yellow cat retreated as Ipewang advanced without a pause. He snarled explosively at the glutton, but gave ground even as he displayed his fangs. The

wolverene meant business, and there was no noisy bluff about his quiet, purposeful advance. The cougar gave up the kill without striking a blow in defence of his own. He lingered at the edge of a matted jungle of timber-line spruce and peered back at his enemy. Ipewang raised his eyes after each bite and fastened them on the cat. There was no chance for a surprise attack, and the lion turned off down the gorge.

Far away on a distant spur a man was covering his line of fox traps, strung out along a bald ridge kept free of snow by the drive of the wind. A bunch of running dark specks against the white background of a snowy slope had first challenged his attention, and Hedrick had trained his glasses on the sheep to determine the cause of their flight. He had located the cougar at his kill just as the wolverene issued from the timber to drive him off.

Hedrick knew he could not reach the spot before night. The trip would be across a deep gorge, the slopes covered with snow that might slide at a dozen different points along the treacherous trail he would have to take, perhaps waiting only for the weight and jar of his crossing to precipitate an avalanche slide at any spot, and with the likelihood that he would not arrive before it was too dark to shoot; but he craved a try for the pelt of the wolverene, probably the same beast that had raided his marten lines a few days past, and he pondered the advisability of returning to set heavy traps at the kill on the following day. It was certain that the yellow cat would not return. The habits of the wolverene were variable to an extreme, and the glutton might return or he might be miles across the divide by morning. He shrugged the idea aside and went his way, wondering afresh at the scarcity of wolverenes.

The scene he had just witnessed testified to the fact that the glutton had few enemies that could best him. When a full-grown cougar slunk away from his kill without a battle, it was certain that his antagonist was one to inspire a wholesome dread in all other killers of the wild. Hedrick had found other spots before at which the signs in the snow revealed the fact that wolverenes had driven mountain lions from their kills. More than once he had chanced across evidence that a black or brown bear had uprooted the carcass of a winter-killed elk from the spring snowdrifts, only to be driven from his find by a family of

wolverenes. There were but few gluttons taken on the trap lines, and fewer still were shot. How, then, could their scarcity be accounted for? The species was prolific, he knew, for a dozen times he had seen the tracks of four or five kits with those of an old wolverene. He had at different times found matted patches of wolverene fur, showing that there one of the beasts had died, but always this sign had been old. In each instance the lesser killers and the meat-eating birds had long since picked the bones, leaving only a scattered patch of fur, without a sign to testify as to the manner in which the glutton met his end.

Hedrick dropped down the slope through the timber, pondering over the problem of the wolverene, and in his abstraction he almost stepped astride of a sleeping porcupine. Here was another mystery in the scheme of things. The porcupine was the most inoffensive of all the wild folk, his numbers legion; but though Hedrick had come to believe that each creature had its appointed place in the balanced scheme of Nature, he had been unable fully to place the hedgehog. He knew that the sluggish creature was abroad in the dead of winter, when famine was the portion of the killers; that bobcat and cougar, wolverene, lynx, and coyote often killed porcupines for food when no other was available.

Perhaps in this way the pick of the killers—the superior individuals of each tribe, those with the patience and ability to kill the quill hog—were enabled to survive, while the less resourceful of their kind perished. The porcupine might thus have been placed on earth to improve the killers through this simple process of survival of the fittest. Further than this Hedrick had been unable to determine the animal's basic purpose in the general balance of all things. These two extremes among the beasts of the hills furnished riddles with which Hedrick occupied his mind while following lonely trails.

Ipewang lingered in his secluded pocket for a week, and cleaned up the carcass of the sheep to the last scrap of hide. He came from his bed in a windfall jam for a final survey of the scene. Nothing but bones was left. The wolverene seized a leg bone and exerted the full pressure of his jaws. The hollow bone cracked between his teeth and exposed the marrow. His tongue explored every part of the fracture till it had yielded the last atom of food; then he crunched another section and repeated. He lifted

his head as two other wolverenes appeared at the edge of the spruce. They advanced, and he growled a warning. Each chose a bone some distance from the one upon which he worked, and the three eyed one another narrowly as they ate.

Hedrick passed along a near-by ridge and dropped down an outcropping spur on the chance that some animal fed at the carcass. A curling eddy of wind carried the man-scent to Ipewang, and he raised his head and sniffed. One of his companions headed swiftly for the shelter of the spruce, but flattened in his tracks, struck dead by some mysterious agency. A terrific roar jarred Ipewang's eardrums, and the sound was flung from wall to wall of the gorge as he started for the timber. The second wolverene went down in a heap, and the crashing echoes of successive reports piled up in the narrow cañon. Splinters flew from a boulder a foot from Ipewang's head. The ricochet buzzed past him and the rock splinters bit through fur and hide. He experienced a swift numbing shock in his left foreleg as he reached the timber. A half-dozen times he fell, the wounded leg buckling under him, before he realised that the member was useless. Then he steadied and travelled on, using the three sound legs. A rifle ball had shattered the lower bone of his left foreleg, splintering it to a pulp for a distance of two inches each way from the point of impact. Hedrick took up the trail of the crippled glutton, but within a few yards he found that he had failed to score a body shot; so he quitted the trail and returned to strip the pelts from the two dead wolverenes.

Ipewang put ten miles between himself and the scene of the shooting before he sought shelter in a windfall jam and nursed his wound. He had learned that man was far more powerful than the wolverene, that he could strike at a distance through some mysterious agency, and hereafter Ipewang would respect the man-scent when he crossed it in the hills. After three days the pangs of hunger drove him forth, and he hobbled across the drifts in search of food. The scent of a lynx presently reached him, and he turned square into the wind and followed the guidance of his nose.

A great grey beast crouched flat in the snow before him, and Ipewang made straight for the big cat. There came the metallic rattle of a trap chain as the lynx shrank back a step and flattened his tufted ears. His mouth opened to emit an explosive, spitting snarl. Ipewang closed with him,

and the lynx scored his neck with a lightning jab of a forepaw. The two rolled into a fighting mass in the snow, the trapped lynx and the crippled wolverene. Ipewang's hide was slit to ribbons by the slashing hooks of the big lynx, but presently he clamped down on the cat's back with his uninjured paw and crushed his enemy into the snow, and the teeth that had cracked the leg bones of mule-deer bucks and big-horn sheep now closed on the neck of the lynx. One crunch of the wolverene's jaws finished the battle, and Ipewang gorged on the hot meat of his enemy.

After feeding he investigated the spot where the lynx had been trapped. The cat had dragged the log toggle ten yards from the scene of his mishap, and Ipewang, his hunger temporarily appeased, moved over to sniff the dead snowshoe hare that had served as a bait set for the lynx. He rested his crippled foot in the snow, and there was a hissing grate of loosened springs as a second trap, one which the cat had missed, closed on his shattered foreleg. For an hour Ipewang fought the thing without a pause, and dragged the heavy toggle three hundred yards downhill. This was no paltry marten trap, but one with a six-inch spread of jaws and two heavy springs fashioned to withstand the heaving strength of a timber wolf.

The log drag became tangled in a thick stand of young lodgepole. It wedged fast, and Ipewang's farther progress was retarded. This, though it further enraged him, was in reality his salvation. As he had moved, the toggle had moved with him. Now he had a solid pull, and there was little his strength could not accomplish if given play. There was little force left in the mangled foreleg, but he hooked his free forepaw through the trap and heaved back with all his strength. The double strand of wire which fastened the chain to the toggle parted, and he rolled a dozen feet with the force of his release. The four-pound trap was still fast to his foot, but he made off with it. A mighty slide pile loomed before him, and he entered a crack between two logs. During the night the intense cold stiffened and numbed the leg held in the trap. Ipewang bit into his own frozen flesh, flesh in which there remained no more sensation than in a piece of dead wood. He amputated the leg above the trap jaws, and laid over two days to nurse the stump.

Hedrick took up the trail of the dragging trap. The signs had showed that the wolverene which had torn apart the trapped

lynx was the one he had shot a few days past, fresh evidence of the animal's courage. Now the glutton was trapped in turn. Hedrick reached the log jam and shook his head. The glutton might be fifty yards inside it, and there was no way to ferret him out. Hunger would drive him forth, and then there would be a chance of his choosing less secure quarters when next he holed up.

Two days thereafter Hedrick came again to the spot to pick up the trail, if Ipewang had left the log jam. He had left, but the trail was that of a free animal, a three-footed glutton, to be sure, but a stump of a leg was far preferable to the dragging weight of a trap. Hedrick had known of scores of fur-bearers that had been footed by traps. These peg-legged ones had learned their lesson, and often the caution thus acquired had enabled them to outlive their fellows.

"Ipewang may live on to a ripe old age," the trapper mused. "He's miles off through the hills by now, and going strong. He's a glutton, sure enough—a glutton for trouble as well as for food. Appetite has led that particular wolverene into a pile of trouble in the last ten days. Maybe that's what the Piegans meant—that his appetite would likely get him killed. I wonder, now."

And this casual guess was nearer the solution of the point which challenged his curiosity than any theory he had formed before. For another two years Hedrick saw the trail of the three-legged wolverene in the hills. Only once each winter did Ipewang cross through the trapper's territory.

The third year after Ipewang lost his leg was one of heavy snows. Early in the winter the peg-legged glutton felt the pinch of famine. He lived on a straight diet of porcupine meat for six weeks, and the quills gained in these conflicts worked through his flesh like a slow fever. Ipewang wandered to the edge of Hedrick's range after a three-day fast. A fresh porcupine trail crossed his route, and he followed it. The animal halted and set his spines as the wolverene drew near.

Ipewang had varied his style of attack to accord with his missing foot. He reached under the squatting porcupine and turned it over on its back, holding it down with his one good foot while he clamped down on the throat with his teeth. A side flip of the tail caught him fairly in the side and drove a hundred quills along his ribs and flank. He sprang away, and the porcupine

died from that one wicked crunch of jaws while Ipewang fought to free his side of the mass of quills.

His frenzied rubbing against a down log dragged some few of the barbed spines from his side, broke off the shafts of others and left the loose points embedded under his skin, while a dozen were driven deep into his flesh, and the protruding quills served as levers to work the points about in the wounds as he attempted to rub them off. He made a meal of the hedgehog and went his way, frequently stopping to seize a troublesome quill with his teeth and extract it.

An hour later Hedrick crossed the trail of the three-legged wolverene at the point where Ipewang had picked up the tracks of the porcupine. The trapper followed and reached the scene of the kill. He noted the evidence of the glutton's tumbling and bouncing about in his efforts to rid himself of the deadly quills.

"Ipewang has a skin full of barbs," he said. "The quill hog left his mark before he died."

His practised eyes read the signs. The spot was somewhat tracked up round the carcass, but one thing was evident—that the glutton had killed his prey within six feet from the point where he had overtaken it. There were no looping trails in the snow to indicate that the killer had circled cautiously for an opening. He had simply moved in on the porcupine and killed it, and he had been treated to a vicious dose of quills.

Hedrick went his way, his mind occupied with a new theory that had suddenly occurred to him. Often he had read the signs in the snow round the scene of kills made by coyote, lynx, and cougar. These animals killed the porcupine for food, but their victory was accomplished by strategy and caution. The trapper had seen the circling trails of a lynx where he had manoeuvred for an opening; the marks of his belly in the snow where the grey cat had crouched flat within a few feet of his quarry; a flurry of snow where he had reached out with a lightning slash of claws as the porcupine, believing all danger past, had risen to waddle on his way. If the strike went true, the hooked claws laid open the unprotected belly at one stroke and the hedgehog died. If the blow failed, then the cat patiently repeated the manoeuvre.

Hedrick had seen the spot where some foraging coyote had circled a porcupine,

padding down a ring in the snow in his interminable circling. It was not exactly clear how a coyote delivered his final blow. Some claimed that he turned his quarry over by a toss of his nose under the foreleg, while other trappers had it that the yellow wolf flipped his prey upon its back by a cunning upward stroke of a paw thrust into the snow beneath it. In either event it required vast patience.

Hedrick remembered the scene of two similar kills, years apart. It had not impressed him at the time, but he now recalled that in each instance the wolverene had simply moved in and seized the porcupine with the singleness of purpose and disregard for danger that characterised the glutton's attack on other beasts. If this trait constituted an invariable rule, the scarcity of wolverenes was accounted for. The quills from succeeding encounters would work in and kill the glutton. Hedrick had seen dogs die of an over-dose of quills.

He checked back over the years. He had never yet stripped the pelt from a glutton taken in porcupine country but what he had found the beast stuck full of quills. Old barbs had often been bedded in gristle that had formed around them. There were red streaks on the flesh side of the pelts, caused by the crawling passage of the quills beneath the skin.

"Maybe I've got it now," he said. "I'm on the right trail at last."

For it had come to Hedrick that the wolverene's courage and ferocity, which made him one to be feared by all other killers of the wild, were perhaps the very qualities which led to his downfall at the hands of the most peacefully inclined animal of all outdoors.

"That must be it," he said. "There's an offset for everything. A wolverene seems too downright powerful to have a limitation like what has been imposed on other killers; but that very belief in his own ability to down any living thing that strays across his trail is a limitation in itself, when he swings clear round the wheel to the other extreme and meets a porcupine. It must be that, but I'd like to back the surmise up with proof."

Twice in the next month Hedrick crossed the trail of the three-legged glutton. Ipewang was disinclined to travel farther than necessity demanded. He was assailed by internal pains in addition to the irritation occasioned by the quills just beneath his skin. This ever-present gnawing served to

stir his natural ferocity and keep it smouldering near the surface, and he was ready to vent it upon anything that moved. While in this mood Ipewang pounced upon a porcupine with even less than his usual amount of caution, and the result was inevitable. He killed the hedgehog, but came out of the encounter with a hundred fresh quills embedded in his flesh. Every day thereafter the internal pains increased. He lay over three days without food, and when at last he crawled from a windfall to forage he was very weak.

The scent of a porcupine reached him, and he tried to trace it. The odour came in elusive whiffs, and he found no trail in the snow. At last he located his quarry well up among the branches of a leaning spruce, and Ipewang mounted the slanting trunk to engage him. The sight of the creature enraged him. Every porcupine Ipewang had met of late had seemed the symbol of past injuries, and he felt an increasing desire to wreak vengeance upon these living representatives for the hurts received from others of their tribe.

The quill hog squatted on the limb, and the wolverene threw caution to the winds and attacked his enemy with a frenzied rush. Quills pierced his jaws as he seized the animal's head and crushed down on it. The two fell from the limb and landed in the snow. A spasmodic jerk of the porcupine's tail drove a hundred quills deep into Ipewang's breast and paunch as they fell through the air. A second slap made a pincushion of his neck and one side of his face.

The glutton killed his enemy, but his mouth was too terribly full of quills to allow him to eat, and he clawed desperately at his neck and face and raked out a few of the shafts fixed there by the porcupine's tail. He crunched a stick of wood between his jaws, snarling as he worked to grind down the darts in his mouth. Then he made off through the hills without having eaten a mouthful.

A snowshoe trail crossed his route, and he turned along it and followed it for a mile before branching off up country. He fought the quills till his strength was gone and he was forced to rest for many hours in a log jam. When he crawled forth, it was another day. He came again to the snowshoe trail some two miles from his former crossing, but followed it only a few yards before turning off. A slow poison seemed working through him, and he stopped every few feet

to fight the quills. Each halt was longer than the preceding ones. A raven flapped overhead and sent forth its sinister call. Another answered from afar. The carrion hosts were even now assembling in anticipation of the feast. A camp robber flitted from branch to branch above the stricken warrior, and the grey jay uttered his querulous note of inquiry at each halt.

Hedrick made the entire rounds of his trap line every five days. He followed the web trail through a timbered side-hill, and sprung every trap as he reached it. The fur was beginning to slip, and this was his last round of the season. He glanced aside to determine if the porcupine still remained in the leaning spruce. In five weeks the animal had never left the tree, sleeping tranquilly on some limb between spells of gnawing bark, and the trapper felt a mild curiosity as to how long he would hold to the same tree.

The animal was gone, but a flock of whiskyjacks flew up from a dark blot in the snow. He investigated the kill and found it the work of the three-legged glutton. When he resumed his way on the trail, he found Ipewang's tracks before him. Ipewang's trail turned up country, but in another two miles Hedrick picked it up where the animal had crossed his trap line coming down.

"These tracks were made to-day," Hedrick said. "He's stopping every few feet to fight the quills."

The stumbling, halting trail challenged the trapper's curiosity, and he followed it, reading each fresh bit of evidence in the snow. There were bird tracks at points where Ipewang had halted, the tracks of the grey jay, which had hopped down to investigate and determine whether each halt would prove the last. Hedrick reached the end of the trail. A dark shape sprawled in the snow, a warrior laid low by hundreds of two-inch shafts.

"That's it," Hedrick said. "That's the final proof—an offset for everything. Some gluttons—human ones—mostly live to eat, but the wolverene eats to die; the appetite that kills." He turned back toward his trap line. "It's dead sure that many a wolverene meets his end that way. This clears things up. Nature mostly centres on one point—appetite."

The guttural squawk of a raven sounded from behind him, the cry of a grey jay. Appetite was summoning the meat-eating birds to gather round the feast.

THE BEE HUNT

By M. F. WATTS

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT B. M. PAXTON

THE bees are swarming! That fatal tocsin rang through the house. Of course scientific bee-keepers do not admit swarms; still, with us, in spite of deep attention to Professor Cheshire's exhaustive volumes, patent non-swarm hives, extra supers, etc., swarms occur. Our bees persist in keeping up old family custom. The first really hot day they are off. One can almost fancy the old queen saying, with that touch of modern vulgarity from which even our village is not exempt: "Come on, girls! Who's for an out? The third apple tree as usual, I suppose."

It was such a very big swarm, and the day was so very hot that I was afraid to leave them hanging until Master returned, therefore I bravely donned the wide straw hat and veil, and sallied forth, carrying a straw skep and a smoker. Alas, the swarm had not waited for me!

Where? When? Nobody knew. The garden boy, interrogated, said: "I didn't look; no one told me to. I don't take no interest in insec's meself."

I could not lose my valuable bees without an effort, so I betook me into the village. A cloud of bees making a noise like a young aeroplane could hardly pass unnoticed; even rustics who appear to observe nothing at all must have heard the noise.

I started inquiries at "The Vine Leaf," which may be called the centre of village life. Might I look about in their orchard? I might.

An old man sitting on the bowling green, dreamily smoking a short clay, roused himself to ask me if I was looking for anything. I asked him if he had seen any bees.

"Well, no, but I've no time to waste staring round me for bees, I haven't! I always heerd as how a swarm in May is worth a load of hay."

"Perhaps it is," I returned politely, "if you don't lose it."

"Ah, well, that's the same with hay, too, ain't it? I suppose you *understand* bees?"

You mind to tell 'em right off if there is a death in the house——"

I left him mumbling over the two ancient saws that, in the ignorant, seem to compose the whole art of bee-keeping. I started to explore the orchard. A small child watched me apprehensively, then she volunteered:

"There were buzzies in the sky, but they've gone now."

"Which way?" I was on the line. She pointed over a wall, and I hastened on my quest. I knocked at a door, and an acid-faced female opened it.

"I have come about some bees——" I began.

"We don't give nothing to nobody, never!" she said firmly, and banged the door.

I pursued my way and turned in at a cottage where a woman, with her head tied up, was beating a carpet.

"I suppose that you haven't seen any bees about?" I asked rather timidly, realising from her expression that my appearance struck her as peculiar.

"You don't mean wasps, do you?"

"No, I mean bees. I'm looking for a swarm."

"We've none here; but I can tell you we've strings of caterpillars on the gooseberries." She looked at me hopefully.

"I am sorry, I only want bees."

"Wait a bit. I do remember a bee coming to feed in our garden a week or so back. Would that be it?"

"No, I am afraid not. You see, I want a lot of bees."

"What would you do with them if you found them?" she asked unexpectedly.

"I should take them home in this skep."

She regarded me queerly. "Would you, now? I always do say it's a strange world, and takes all sorts to make it. Good afternoon!"

As she evidently thought I had just escaped from the county asylum, I passed once more into the heat and glare of the sun. I had an uncomfortable memory of

Professor Cheshire stating casually that it was quite possible for a swarm to travel five miles once started.

I began my next inquiries cautiously :
 "Do you know anything about bees?"

"I have lost a swarm."

"Is it many?"

"About fifteen thousand, I expect."

"Dear, dear, what a sad accident! I suppose if one goes they all go. And



"Fancy my bees having come to you, Rector! They must have known you loved bees!" But the Rector was not there."

A pleasant-faced woman in a sun-bonnet answered me. "Well, mum, not much. I know they have a queen, and all walk backward at her, in respect like."

do they have a homing instinct, like pigeons?"

"Not exactly, but of course every bee can find her way back to the hive, only——"

"I shouldn't worry. I don't doubt but that they will be back by nightfall. Our dog is very late sometimes, but he always comes. If I see any, could I turn them for you?"

"No, thank you; it doesn't matter." I walked away, and she called to me over the gate: "I remember something my father used to say about bees—it's very important to tell them if there is a death in the house!"

The general abysmal ignorance displayed by everyone amazed me—I had thought that all country people knew about bees. Hot, tired, and rather hopeless, I turned up a farm lane, and encountered a labourer, who grinned at me.

"Have you seen any bees?"

"Nay, A havna, and if A had, A wunna go near them. Mi moothor, she went takkin' a swarm wi' a pikel in a high pear tree once; moothor thrust pikel into skep and reared it up for to get 'em down, and pikel coom out, and t' bees all fell on her yed. Eee! She were stung proper! She swelled up and coom out in purple! A shanna forget it. No bees for me! But you might inquire at farm."

I asked at the farm, and a suspicious-looking old lady who was lodging there poked her head out of the window and listened.

"Are you *kind* to your bees?" she interrupted. "I don't see why they left you if you are kind to them. You ought always to be kind to dumb animals."

"Have you done many kindnesses to bees yourself?"

"Not personally, but I am *sure* if I owned any they would not want to run away. I know that a swarm in May is worth a load of hay. Don't be cruel to them if you find them."

"I assure you it is not the bees who will suffer when I find them."

I trailed on round the countryside, asking in vain for news of my vagrants. I hope I acquired merit by listening seriously and politely to much information quite unknown to Professor Cheshire. The *most* original lore was imparted to me by an elderly man whom I found digging in a little garden with a disused beehive in it. He spied me over the wall and inquired if I was "seeching a swarm."

I told him my woes, and he unbosomed himself of his own troubles.

"Bees," he said, "is disheartening. You spend a mint o' money on a second-hand hive from a friend whose little lot died of this here Hleywite desease. I will say the swarm cost me nothin', comin' unexpected, but what did I get out of it? Nothing but trouble with all the neighbours sending in to complain of stings. Honey? Well, yes, but a man tires of honey to his tea; he'd sooner have some honest jam or a tommy or two. Then just as bees goes up in value—with these rich gentlemen takin' 'em up as a hobby and giving fancy prices for a stock—what do my bees do? Ungrateful little creeturs—die! That's it—die!"

"Isle of Wight?" I murmured.

"Not it. They start eating their young—that's what they do—eat their young! And once a bee starts that game, you can't break her, not if you was Barnum. These experts don't believe me. But I haven't a bee left—that proves it to you. Well, good day! I wish you luck, but I doubt you find it if you find the bees."

It was growing late; I must resign myself to my loss. As I passed the old rectory with its rose hedge, a stream of soapy water descended on my upturned face. The Rector was busily engaged in spraying green fly. He apologised and begged me to rest in his shady garden.

"I remember well," he said, "when I was a boy, and my father—the Archdeacon—kept bees. I was devoted to them. Some people are afraid of bees. Now, I never was; I assure you it was a positive *pleasure* to me to hive a swarm. I loved the bees and the bees loved me. I wonder if you know of a strange old superstition which says that if there is a passing away in a family the bees should at once be informed? Yes? And also I may tell you that there is a saying that 'a swarm in May is worth a load of hay.' You may or you may not have heard this?"

In the words of Bart Smallweed, I whispered "a few."

"Dear me, I wonder what that may be?" exclaimed the Rector, waving his syringe. The spray descended gently on a brown-and-yellow velvety ball swaying on a branch of the apple tree. The bees of which it was composed clung more tightly together.

"My swarm! At last! Fancy my bees having come to you, Rector! They must have known you loved bees!"

But the Rector was not there.

THE GREAT WE

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

MR. BOULTER will always attribute the trouble in the business to his illness, but his wife will always put it the other way round. Anyhow, the illness came upon him at the time when Ditley was contracting after the war expansion, and shops—and people—were often empty; and the doctor called it nervous breakdown.

"At sixty a man has to be careful," he said; "but he'll soon pull round, if you can keep him from worrying."

Mrs. Boulter couldn't keep her husband from "wondering how it was going with the business." So she invited Tom, the eldest son, who was in an accountant's office in Town, to come down and look over the books.

Tom's verdict was very unfavourable. In fact, he concluded that the business couldn't go on. So he asked his one brother and two sisters—all married and living away from Ditley—to "run down and talk over what we can do for the old people."

"We won't tell them the worst till we can tell them the best," he proposed. "We'll discuss it at Aunt Hope's, so that they won't know anything's going on."

Aunt Hope was Mr. Boulter's youngest and only surviving sister. She took part in the discussion as a matter of course. She was a little lady who would not be kept out of things; not much older than Tom, and still distinctly pretty in a rather tired way. The younger Boulders regarded her as both one of the elders and one of themselves, so her opinion had double weight.

The conference accepted Tom's view that the business must close, and decided to contribute to provide a "living" allowance for "the old people." They communicated both decisions to Mrs. Boulter in the parlour behind the shop at a quarter to eleven one morning. Mr. Boulter was not yet allowed downstairs until eleven.

Mrs. Boulter took the bad news bravely

for herself, but she was greatly troubled about her husband.

"The important thing," she told the family, "is not to let father excite himself. The doctor hopes that he will pull round all right, if we can stop him from worrying. Though I don't know how we can, if he has to close the place." She twisted her handkerchief in her hands. (She had not used it to her eyes yet.) "Of course I knew there was something wrong when you all came, but I hoped that, at the worst, we could keep the shop going till he was well enough for me to take him away. Then he wouldn't have actually seen it closed, and I could have broken it to him gradually."

"It's losing money every week," Tom told her. "We can't go on piling up the loss to fall on other people."

"Other people!" Mrs. Boulter cried sharply. "You don't mean—Tom, you mean that there's more loss already than we can meet ourselves? That we shall have to—have to—fail?"

"I'm afraid so, mum," Tom owned.

"Poor old dad!" said Mrs. Boulter.

"Poor old mum!" said Tom. He put his hand on her shoulder, and she used the handkerchief at last.

"I wish now that I hadn't sunk my money in an annuity," said Aunt Hope. "He'll feel it so. For a Boulter to go bankrupt! I suppose that is what it comes to, Tom?"

"That's what it comes to, old dear. Nowadays people don't look upon failing as necessarily a disgrace, as they did before the War. Lots of good men have come to it."

"A Boulter never has," Aunt Hope murmured, with a choke.

"It isn't dad's fault," Mrs. Boulter sobbed. "I'm sure no one has worked harder or taken less for himself."

"Yes, yes," said Will, the second son, "we all know that, mum. There's nobody who's deserved to get on more than dad. It's sheer bad luck, but there it is. It's no

use hanging on for things to grow worse. You bring him down, mum, and we'll break it to him as mildly as we can."

"I think," his mother said, "I shall prepare him a little. Perhaps he'd take it better from me. We have shared our troubles for a good many years. . . . I've lost my handkerchief. . . ."

Both boys offered theirs.

"I fancy dad realised that things are pretty bad," Lucy, the eldest daughter, told her. "Last night he asked how trade was with Dick and me. I told him, 'Only middling, dad.' Then he said, 'It's worse than that with us, Lou, worse with us. I don't know how it will end.' Of course he'd suspect something from all of us coming down to Ditley."

"He knew that Tom was going into the books," her mother said, "but he'd no idea they were so bad."

"We'll make as light as we can of the losses," Ruby, the youngest child, proposed, "and the most of what we are going to do for you and him. Perhaps it will turn out for the best. You won't be so very badly off, and he'll be free from worry. He ought to be at his age, and you, little mummie."

"We don't think we're so old," Mrs. Boulter said. "It is good—very good—of you all to be so ready to help us; but a father and mother look to help their children, not to being a burden on them. That's how your father will see it."

"Good gracious!" cried Tom cheerfully. "We've twenty odd years' help to wipe off before we're out of debt and start 'helping.' It will only be lightening our burden a little."

"Exactly," said Will.

"Just so," Lucy agreed. "That's how we all look at it."

"We only wish we could do more," Ruby declared.

"I *can't* think why I was such an idiot as to put all I had into an annuity," Aunt Hope murmured.

"You're doing your full share, old dear," Tom observed, "and we shouldn't let you do any more, anyhow. There isn't the same call on you that there is on us. Suppose you fetch the governor down now, mum. Don't you go upsetting yourself breaking things to him. If you must say anything, just warn him that the books don't come out too well. I'll do the rest of the job."

When mother had gone to help father downstairs, Tom walked over to the mantel, leaned against it, lit a cigarette.

"I'd sell the job of telling the old man cheap," he remarked.

"I'll take it on, if you like," Will offered, "but you'll do it best."

"I don't know about that," Tom demurred, "but I'm the eldest, and the one who has been through the bally books. I'll do it, old man."

"There's one thing we must be very careful about," Lucy observed; "not to let out that we shall all have a struggle to find the trifles we're going to give."

"Perhaps I could manage a trifle more," Aunt Hope murmured.

"No," said the four children at once. Tom added "Good old Hopey!" He never called her "aunt"—regarded her rather as of his own generation.

"Here he comes," Will muttered. He went to the foot of the stairs and helped his mother conduct the invalid to the armchair at the head of the table. Tom patted his shoulder, and the women kissed him. He looked round and shook his grey head. It had become quite grey lately. A year before his hair had retained most of its colour, and he had seemed almost a young man.

"I feel as if I'd come to the dentist's," he observed.

"It's rather like that, governor," Tom owned; "but you always feel better after the tooth's out. So let's pull it! . . . I expect mother has given you a hint that the books don't pan out very well, eh?"

"Yes, my boy. I was afraid they wouldn't. They don't pan out too well, eh?"

"As a matter of fact, they pan out rather badly," Tom owned. "What can you expect in all this depression? No one has anything to spend. If you'd been well and about—mind you, nothing could have made the business pay lately. It's no use blaming yourself for that—still, if you'd been on your feet, I dare say you'd have cut some of the loss."

The invalid held the arms of his chair, gulped. "You mean—there's more loss than there's any hope of making good?" Tom nodded. "More than I can square up?" Tom nodded again. "I've got to—to—to—*fail*!" He groaned.

"Dear," his wife entreated, "you mustn't excite yourself. You know what the doctor said. Nobody will blame you, Bob. Everyone knows how you have always worked and tried."

He nodded; put his hand on his wife's; gulped again.

"It's happened to many a good man lately," Tom observed. "The times are abnormal . . . abnormal. . . ."

"I'm the first Boulter who has ever been abnormal in that way," the invalid said, looking over their heads. "The house should fetch something over and above the mortgage. Won't that square up? Make me able to pay twenty shillings in the pound?"

"I'm afraid not, dad. Of course, if any of us had capital—but you know we haven't. It's more or less a struggle with us. However, we keep our heads above water. With a few hundred, perhaps a thousand, to put in, the business might tide over. However, we haven't it. There's just one satisfactory thing about the unfortunate affair. It gives us a chance to pay off a little of the debt we all owe to you and mum."

"Children don't owe for their upbringing," Mr. Boulter denied.

"Yes, they do," Lucy cried, "when you do so much for them that you can't save for yourself. That's what we owe for."

"You did such a lot for us," Ruby observed. "No children in the place had so much."

"By Jove, no!" Will cried. "So far as 'owings' go, we owe you more than we can ever pay. But it isn't just a question of 'owings' between you and old mum and us, dad. That's all right. If there's anyone who deserves any credit, it's Aunt Hope. She's in it, as you'll see from the paper Tom's drawn up."

"And might guess before you see it," Tom said, "knowing good old Hopey."

"Before the children's times," Aunt Hope choked out, "there was a little girl that you made a pet baby of, did such a lot for. When she wanted pennies and things, she always screamed out 'Bob, Bob!' Dear old Bob! If I hadn't sunk my money—it was you who persuaded me to—you should have it all. I'm so pleased to do what little I can, in with the others, for you and for Bess." She put her arm through her sister-in-law's. "No one can expect to have luck in everything. You had yours in a lump when you married Bess!"

"I did," Mr. Boulter said. "I did! God bless you all. . . . I was afraid this was coming, but it's a blow, all the same, now it has come. I don't know how I shall hold my head up. . . . Bankrupt!"

"You won't be bankrupt of respect, dear," his wife told him.

"No, no. . . . But some of them will crow over me."

"Everyone here," Will declared, "so far as I can make out, is too shaky himself to crow over you."

"And nobody whose opinion you would value will wish to do so," Aunt Hope asserted. "They'd better not try it on with me!"

"Nobody would dare to 'try it on' with a woman your size!" Tom observed. (Aunt Hope was five feet three.) "That's why I took a big 'un!" (Mrs. Tom was five feet ten and correspondingly placid.) "Not that you dare try *them* too far! Well, governor, we've noted down here what we proposed to do monthly, we four 'brats' and good old Hopey. We—er—I don't quite know how to put it, but—er—we're awfully sorry it's come to this, of course, but—we're awfully glad to do what we're doing, and—er—it isn't all we'd like to do, or a tenth part of what we owe to you and mum, and—that's how we feel about it."

"I——" said Mr. Boulter. "My dears—I——"

His voice trembled and his hands shook on the chair.

"Now, Bob," his wife entreated, "you really mustn't excite yourself. Remember what the doctor said. You needn't say any more about it, only just thank them—the dear children—dear Hope. They'll know, without telling, how you feel. And I—I——"

"Don't *you* excite yourself," Mr. Boulter advised. "We all know how *you* feel about things. . . . Children, God bless you all. And you, Hope. I feel rather—rather a useless old man, but——"

"My dear!" his wife protested.

"Bob!" Aunt Hope cried.

"Dad!" Tom and Will and Lucy remonstrated.

"Now, wasn't that a silly thing to say?" Ruby—always the impudent one—reproved him. "Dear old dad!"

"But," he finished, "none of you think I am. I know that. So I'll put on as brave a face as I can, pull round as well as I can, and try to find something to do, and still be some little use to you all."

"Bravo!" they all cried.

"Knew you'd take it like a sport," Tom observed, "like you brought us up to be. Have a cigarette, dad? Now let's go over it in detail."

They discussed the settlement of affairs, and decided to put up the shutters after

their mid-day dinner. Then they argued about the allowances which the children and Aunt Hope proposed to make. Mr. and Mrs. Boulter thought that these were too much, and that they could manage with less. The subscribers thought that they weren't really sufficient, and hoped that some of them would soon be in a position to do more. "Besides," Ruby said, "we're going to send them, and you can't send them back. So it's no use arguing."

However, Mr. Boulter still argued.

Tom took advantage of his father being busy in discussion to step into the shop and tell the man to put up the shutters quietly. He found a letter there and brought it in. His father opened it, started, groaned.

"Tom," he said, "I knew what you went into the shop for, though I didn't say anything. Tell Smith not to do it now—not till he's been and gone. I won't let him know what I've come to. I won't have him crow over me. I can't stand that. I can't."

"Righto, gov," Tom said, and opened the door into the shop. "Father doesn't want it done just yet, Smith. Wait till I speak to you again. Who's the letter from, dad?"

"Eric Mann," Mr. Boulter stated.

"Heavens!" cried Ruby. "The Great I Am!"

It was Aunt Hope's name for Mann, which the children had adopted.

"He's coming down this morning," Mr. Boulter said, "to consider financing a new hall in the gardens, and 'one or two other little things.' He likes to speak of a few thousands as little things. That's Mann all over! When he was a boy I often gave him a copper. Underfed little wretch!"

"Well," said Tom, "he's grown big enough now, in both ways."

"Especially," Aunt Hope observed, "in self-importance. But he won't try it on with me!"

She tossed her head; still a noticeably pretty head, if a rather weary one. Her nephews and nieces could never make out why she hadn't married. "She might have done it a dozen times," Lou often declared, meaning that a dozen opportunities had offered for "doing it" once.

"Especially," Mr. Boulter agreed, "in that. I suppose it's miserable jealousy, but when I see him—fifteen years or more my junior, and not so good as I am in many things, though I say so myself—when I see him rolling in money, spreading out his

chest, and sticking his thumbs in his arm-holes, and hear him saying 'I do this,' and 'I think of doing that,' and 'Money is power, Boulter,' and 'I am the man they come to!' I am—goodness knows what! Ugh! It's unjust, unjust I——"

"Bob, darling," Mrs. Boulter implored, "you know you mustn't excite yourself so."

"I'm not excited, Bessie, not at all excited. You women always think a man is excited if he just speaks out. I say it is unjust. Why should I have nothing—I only mean in money, only in money—why should I have nothing and he have everything in life that he wants? As he has had for nearly twenty years."

"Oh, no!" said Aunt Hope sharply.

"Oh-h-h!" cried inquisitive Ruby. "Auntie, *did* he—didn't *you*——"

"If you must know, you little question-mark," Aunt Hope snapped, "he did, and I didn't. Mr. Mann asked me to be Mrs. I Am, and I preferred to be Miss I Am Not. I dare say, when he sees me now, he thinks that was one of his strokes of luck!" She sighed. "I'm not sighing for him," she explained, "but for his money. I wish I had some of it now."

"Then you'd have him too," Lucy observed, "and as you dislike him——"

"I didn't say 'dislike,'" Aunt Hope corrected. "I couldn't stand his I-Am ways; but he was all right, except for that. Does he say he's coming to see you this morning, Bob?"

"Yes," Mr. Boulter said. "He says that he's coming in for 'half an hour's chat.' The 'chat' will be for an hour and a half, and it will be all about himself. 'I am, I am. I do, I do!'"

"I think I'd better say you aren't well enough to talk for more than a few minutes," Mrs. Boulter proposed.

"I wonder, governor," Tom observed thoughtfully, "whether when the chat comes round to your affairs——"

"I'd rather starve than ask help from him!" Mr. Boulter cried. He struck his fist feebly on the table. "Rather starve than ask Mann for anything! And it would be no use if I did!"

"I don't think that," Aunt Hope interposed. "Eric was never ungenerous. He has given a good many things to the town. I don't believe he gave them entirely for swank, though he swanks about them. If he did anything for you, he'd swank about that. So don't you take it, Bob. You'd rather have a little from us who delight to

help you; but it isn't help—only paying back."

"You wouldn't ask him for anything, of course," Will said; "but if he offered—naturally he will ask how you are getting on, and——"

"He won't ask," Mr. Boulter interrupted. "He'll talk and talk about himself, and not trouble about me or anyone else. What is there for dinner, Bessie? Call it lunch to him, if he comes and we have to ask him. Last year he dropped in about this time. What is there? That won't do—won't do. Send out for something; make a spread. I'd fast for a week afterwards rather than have him think we were hard up and stinting and going short. I——"

"Dad," Lucy protested, "you really must *not* work yourself up. You——"

"It's no use talking, Lou," her father told her. "I can't stand him crowing over me. I try not to be envious, and I own there are some good points in him, but to-day I can't endure to be bragged at. Send out for something to make a spread, Bess."

"You come with me, Lucy," Aunt Hope proposed. "We'll get some things, and you can bring them in."

"You'll come back to din—lunch with us, Hope, dear," Mrs. Boulter urged.

"No, Bess, I'm not coming to meet I Am. I daren't. If I heard him crowing to-day, I should be rude. At the best of times I feel tempted to remind him that he's speaking to Miss I Am Not and not to Mrs. I Am. . . . Come on, Lou."

Aunt and niece went out.

* * * * *

"I suppose," Lucy observed, as they walked down the street, "you'll put on your best bib and tucker, and do a bit of swank yourself, if you meet him?"

"No," Aunt Hope denied. "I shall put on my worst, and laugh and jabber, and show him that poor faded, ill-dressed thing as I am——"

"You know you're the best-dressed woman in the place," Lou protested.

"Well, I make most of the things myself. Anyhow, my looks have gone a lot lately, I know."

"Why, Hopsy dear, Ruby and I often wish we had half of them!"

"No complexion," Aunt Hope snapped.

"You've the features," Lou urged, "and there's your tongue!"

"*That's* all right! Wouldn't he have had it if—— I'll let him think—let him see, I mean—that I'm glad to be a shabby old

maid rather than Mrs. I Am, with everything I could wish for."

"He would have given it to you?" Lou suggested thoughtfully.

"I don't know. . . . Yes, I'll give the devil his due. He'd have been generous to me. I don't doubt that. . . . Shall we go to Bond's?"

"Slater's is cheaper," Lou pointed out.

"Then we'll go to Bond's," said Aunt Hope obstinately.

"Very well, my dear. . . . It's rather a pity you didn't like him. . . . I suppose you didn't?"

"I suppose not. . . . I sometimes think I might have, if he hadn't been the great I Am. . . . He's a clever man—much cleverer than your father will ever admit—and big and strong, as you'll remember. He's a man you do remember. He was very kind to me in his way, and if he hadn't been so domineering, I might have liked him. It wasn't so much domineering as bragging. He's—oh, the last word!"

"Is he really so bad as all that?" Lucy doubted. "I've only seen him once or twice since I was a youngster. We didn't dislike him then. He used to tip us as nobody else ever did. Sovereigns! There's something nice in a man who is good to children, you know. Why don't you come in? He might like to see you?"

"If he wanted to see me, I suppose he could come and call, couldn't he? He isn't a king for ladies to call on him. As to wanting to see me, I don't think he cares nowadays whom he sees, so long as he has an audience. He resented my refusing him—the way I did it—and he's never got over it. He won't want to see *me*! You notice when he's getting too much on your father's nerves, and make your mother say that dad must lie down. . . . Let's have the big pie, Lou, and ice creams. You've got to reek with prosperity. Be sure you make out that Dick and you are doing well. *You* be sidey with *him*. Though I don't say that he's exactly sidey. . . . If I am mentioned, be sure to bring in that 'Aunt Hope enjoys life so.' If you feel like being rude, you can say, 'She calls herself Miss I Am Not! I wonder why?'"

"He used to tip us youngsters, you know," Lucy protested again. "Somehow, I can't can't believe that he's quite so bad as you and dad make out. If he's decent, he'll ask about dad's illness, and about business and how it's going on, and then, if he gets an inkling that things are wrong, he'll say,

'Can I help?' You know dad did quite a lot of things for him when he was a boy. He used to tell us that, when he gave us the tips; and you said he wasn't ungenerous."

"I don't know how much of his generosity is swank," Aunt Hope qualified; "but he does give people things, and does things for the town. No, I don't think he's ungenerous. I dare say he would help your

indignantly. "There is no one in the world less inquisitive than I. I only like to know all about things!"

"I see! Funny little Miss Like-to-Know. All right. I'll come and increase your knowledge directly he's gone . . . Auntie!"

"Well?"

"If I think he's decent, I've a good mind to let out to him myself how things are. Dad helped him when he was a boy, and



"There was almost consternation when Mann and Aunt Hope walked in to tea together."

father if he were asked, or even if he noticed that help was wanted. He doesn't notice other people. He is full of himself. 'I Am, I Am.' Well, thank Heaven, I'm Miss I Am Not! Now you take the things in; and remember what I told you, and run round and let me know when he's gone, and tell me everything he said."

"Nosey little Auntie!" Lucy laughed.

"I am not, Lucy," Aunt Hope denied

perhaps he'd like to do something for him in return—be quite glad to have the chance."

"I wish," Aunt Hope said sadly, "I could believe that he cares two straws about anybody but himself. Don't humiliate your father by letting out that he's in need, Lou. It will go in one ear and out the other. He's chock full of his own affairs. That was what I couldn't stand."

"And yet you liked him."

"I didn't say 'like'; I said 'didn't dislike.'"

"Oh!" scoffed Lucy. "Said! . . . I'm a woman myself, my dear. . . . I'll run round the moment he goes. We ought to play him out with a band!"

* * * * *

Soon after three o'clock Lucy went round to her Aunt's place. (Aunt Hope rented a

money. 'Really a few thousand don't matter much to me, Boulter. They know that.' He bragged how the people here were 'making up to him' to get him to help with the recreation gardens, and how anxious they were that he should build that hall. 'It will bring money into the place, Boulter; and they want it, want it! Funny to think I am the man they come to! Some of 'em cuffed me when I was a youngster. Ha, ha,



little house, "to have a home over her head," but let out half.)

"He's been and gone," Lucy announced, "and you were quite right. He is a selfish pig! He talked about nothing but himself, and what he had done and was going to do; how Lord Somebody and Lord Somebody Else came to him to finance things; how he was asked to subscribe to this and that, and kow-towed to for his influence and

ha! I suppose a lot of the poor beggars here are going under in this depression, eh?" He stuck his thumbs in his armholes while he talked. The annoying thing is that he's such a fine, big, ugly-handsome man that he can't look a fool even when he brags. Father said he didn't know; but luckily he was doing well—very well, though he didn't boast of it. The way he held to his chair when he said that! Mother ran off

upstairs then, and when Ruby went to her she was crying. Do you know, I could have killed the man!"

"Did he take it in, do you think, Lucy?" Aunt Hope asked anxiously. "What your father said about doing well? Eric Mann sees through things, notices when he doesn't seem to be noticing. He is clever, horribly clever. I remember once . . . Well, he even saw through me sometimes!"

"Did he, now? When you didn't mean to be seen through?" Aunt Hope nodded. "Then he *must* be clever! Yes, I think he is clever. Myself, I have a hard job not to like him. He seems so—well, so full of 'man.' I don't mean that for a joke; one 'n,' you know. I don't think he troubled to believe or disbelieve poor dear old dad's poor little bit of swank. Oh, it was so pitiful! Well, it's no use fretting. I don't think he cared whether it was true or not. He was only thinking of himself, not of father. Do you know—I stayed with them all the time. I was determined to hear—do you know he didn't once ask father how the business was going, not even that. He must have seen how ill dad looked, and how worried, but he didn't care. He never once said a word about dad's affairs. When he went, father said, 'Lou, many and many a time I helped him—helped him unasked. My help was always unasked. He wasn't the sort to beg. I'll say that for him. . . . I helped him so often that he even expressed gratitude for it. "I don't say much," he told me once, "but I shan't forget." . . . Well, *he* hasn't asked, even when he must see the broken-down wretch that I am. . . . I—take me upstairs, some of you. I'll lie down for a bit. When you say your prayers, Lou—I hope you sometimes do—pray for your father to be kept from too much bitterness.' . . . I can't wonder that dad felt bitter, though it isn't like him. Just think! Mr. Mann didn't even trouble to ask dad how business was."

"Did he ask about—*anything*," Aunt Hope inquired, "or anyone?"

"No, dear. Not even about you."

"Not even about me. That doesn't matter. Don't think I'm grizzling about *him*, Lou. The great selfish, bragging brute! It's only—I wish he hadn't come to be—like he is. I was rather young, you know, and—in some ways he was very nice to me; did things for me. I never felt sure how I might have answered if he had asked me differently."

"Did he plump it on you?" Lou inquired.

"Rather. I didn't mind *that*. He said—but it doesn't matter. . . . If you want to know, we were walking along the cliffs, and he took hold of my arm suddenly and said: 'Hope, I don't believe you've any idea how *much* you are to me. I want to marry you!'"

"That," Lucy pronounced, "was all right."

"Yes; but then he said, 'But for Heaven's sake, Hope, don't have me if it's only for my money.' As if I would! As if I would! . . . Sometimes I wish I had struck him for saying that. I think I did worse. I said 'No! And that's for yourself!' Still, I did think well of him in some ways. He was so big. Do you know, once he picked me up and put me on a shelf. It's where a man ought to put a woman. I don't care, of course, but . . . Now I have lost my last little bit of respect for him. I'd have liked to keep that. I—you like to keep your idea of a man that you very nearly—"

She paused abruptly at the maid's entry.

"A gentleman would like to see you, miss," the girl announced. "He said his name was Mann. I think he's the London gent that I was telling you father talked of. My, ain't he dressed fine? And big! Said he was a nold friend of yourn, he did."

"You can show him in," Miss Hope said. "You've your bag, Lucy. Give me the powder-puff. Put it away quick. I shall only bow; not shake hands. He shan't think that I—Here he comes! . . . This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Mann. But I suppose I should say 'honour,' seeing that you are now such a great man!"

"Well," he remarked, looking down at her from his great height—he was an unusually big man—"you'd probably have said it if you'd wanted to! You generally did. . . . I notice that you don't receive an old friend with marked cordiality, Hope. I am rather given to outspokenness, too."

"The friendship has been rather intermittent, you know," she observed ("with that wicked, find-me-out look of hers," Lucy told Ruby afterwards). "I have never been presented at Court, I am too naughty a radical to kiss the hand of the king! Do sit down. You look so terrifyingly big standing!" He sat down. "You know my niece, don't you?"

"I have that pleasure—honour—which ever I should say. Well, Hope, I should

have called to see you, anyhow, but I have a special purpose. I don't know whether it is one that I had better mention before your niece?"

"If it's a proposal," Lucy laughed, "I think you had better not!"

"It isn't *that* sort of proposal," he stated grimly.

"Well, I'll go," Lucy offered laughingly. ("I had to laugh," she told Ruby. "I liked the way he stood up to old Hope.")

"I shan't detain your aunt long," he promised. "Say twenty minutes for business and twenty seconds for complimentary remarks—mine! Before you leave us, Mrs. Meadows, may I ask one thing? Is your father *very* ill?"

"Oh," Lucy said, "you did notice that he was ill, then? No, not *very* ill now. He's pulling round. He's in rather a worrying state—if you'd noticed that!"

"I notice more than I say sometimes, Mrs. Meadows, and remember more. I remember that your father was very good to me years ago—exceedingly good. I am grateful. It would be a pleasure—a pleasant duty—to me if I had an opportunity to repay a little of his kindness."

"Oh!" Lucy cried. "Oh! I *told* Auntie I didn't believe that you——" She stopped confusedly.

"That I was quite so bad as she thought, eh? That is rather my own opinion. Well, I was going to speak about your father's affairs. Shall I speak before your niece. Hope, or to you alone?"

Aunt Hope sat bolt upright upon the sofa, a frail but brave little person, with a suddenly pale face.

"As I haven't spoken too well of you to her, Eric," she said, "I should like her to hear what you have to say. And to hear any apology that I make—if it is due."

"I shouldn't want to score off you, Hope, you know. . . . As you please. Well, I heard in the town this morning that your brother was going under. I can't have that, of course."

"Of course?" Aunt Hope gasped.

"I said 'of course.' He shan't go under, if I have to find out his creditors and pay their bills direct. I said *shan't*. But I don't want to do it in that way. He won't like taking help from me; would hate me to know that he was in need of help. I could see how he feels. I was very careful not to speak of his affairs, only of my own and other people's. I tried to give him a hint that any of the old friends who were down

might come to me; but he took it the wrong way. He is rather—what's the word?—say, he feels that fortune has given me some of the prosperity which was due to him. Put his feeling down to my fault. I'm afraid I show off my prosperity a bit. I don't lie about it, mind, don't overstate it, but I don't understate it. To me it seems natural to state just the plain facts. Perhaps it would be better if I kept quiet about them—you've often told me so!—but I don't. Partly from that reason. . . . I'm pig-headed. Not the only one! You put my back up years ago, you know, Hope. I've never forgotten. It—scarred me—if that is any satisfaction to you. Anyhow, I'm what I am; what you'd expect from a self-made man. I know myself. That isn't easy, but I had the advantage of much plain speaking from you. . . . Your Aunt used to call me the Great I Am, Mrs. Meadows. However, that's neither here nor there. I want to pay what I owe to your father—your brother, Hope—without irritating him by letting him know that it comes from me. My idea is this, Hope. You let me know how much he wants to put matters entirely straight and restart things properly. Don't understate it. I'll pay it over to you, and you can say that it comes from your long stocking!"

"Mr. Mann," Lucy cried, "I don't care what Aunt—I mean what anybody says, I think you're a—a—such a nice man!"

"Thank you, my dear. But this is only justice—honesty—paying an honoured claim. Well, Hope, will you do it?"

"Oh, Eric," Aunt Hope cried, "how could I? For one thing, he knows I haven't the money. He'd think I'd begged it from you! No, no, no! You must go and offer it to him. He does need it, Eric. When he finds out what you *really* are, he'll get over his prejudice. Like I have. That's meant for the apology."

Aunt Hope began to cry.

"I think," Lucy observed, "I'd better go!"

She went.

* * * * *

"Well," Mann asked, "how shall we work it, Hope? Shall we go round and talk to him? Or get the boys round here and arrange it with them? Tom seems to be a sensible chap. If you'd been a sensible girl fifteen years ago, we shouldn't have all this bother. You'd just ask your husband for what you wanted for your brother, and hand it over to him!"

"It isn't fifteen years," Miss Hope denied, wiping her eyes. "It's sixteen and nearly three m-months. . . ."

"All but five days," Mann said.

"What? You—you've counted the time?"

"Counted the time. . . . I've been very near coming to you often, because, Hope, I knew that in a way you did like me; but that seemed rather an argument against coming."

"Men are no good at argument," Miss Hope choked out.

"Well, the more you liked me, the more you must dislike my ways for the dislike to turn the balance. That's how I saw it. . . . Hope, my girl"—he put his hand on her shoulder—"I don't grouse about what you are or are not. You're a rare little handful, you know! But I'm ready to take you as you are and be good to you. Suppose you take *me* as I am!"

"And be good to you!" Aunt Hope added eagerly. She put her hand on his. . . .

"Mrs. I Am!" he teased.

"Ye-es. But if that means you think I am going to let you boss me, let me tell you I Am Not! Not more than I like, anyhow!"

* * * * *

Lucy said nothing to the family about meeting the Great I Am at Aunt's. She didn't want "to give old Hopey away, if nothing came of it." So there was almost consternation when Mann and Aunt Hope walked in to tea together.

"Eric and I have been talking over your old business, Bob," Aunt Hope announced, "and he says you'll never allow him to

straighten it out till he's your brother-in-law. So I've had to promise I'll let him be. That isn't *really* why I'm doing it, though!"

She laughed and looked up at the big man. (Her brother saw her again as a child then.)

There was a pause while the family thought of something to say, for their feeling against the Great I Am did not go in a moment. He broke the silence.

"I am——" he began proudly.

They all winced.

"A very lucky man," he concluded.

They all held out their hands, except Lucy. She kissed him.

* * * * *

"No one," Mr. Boulter told the family, before he went to bed, "could have done what he has done more considerately. He tried to make out that *I* was conferring the favour!"

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Boulter, "you *did* help him; and, as he said, you are really just collecting a debt; but I think he has been splendid."

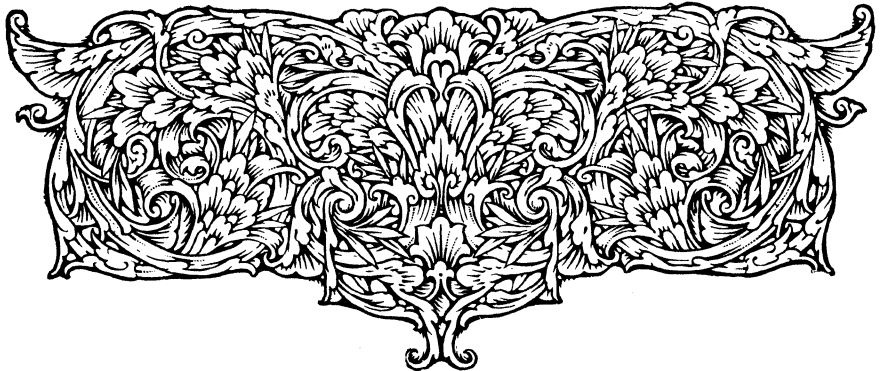
"I liked the way he spoke of the pleasure he got out of pleasing old Hopey," Tom observed.

"And I liked the way he stuck up to her," Lucy laughed.

"Umph!" said Will. "I don't think we shall hear much more of I Am from him."

"No," said Ruby, "but we shall hear a great deal of He Is from Aunt Hope!"

"Ah," said Mr. Boulter, "perhaps it will be We Are!" He put his arm through his wife's. . . . "After many years," he said. "After many years. . . . And you children! . . . The Great We!"





POSITION FOR PUTTING: HEELS TOGETHER AND TOES POINTING OUTWARDS. THIS IS THE BEST STANCE FOR THE PENDULUM SWING.

PLAYING YOUR OWN GAME IN GOLF

By BERT SEYMOUR

Winner of "The News of the World" Tournament, 1921, the Croydon and District Professional Alliance Cup, 1920, and the Essex Championship Cup, 1922

(In a chat with Clyde Foster)

Illustrated from action-photographs by Percy G. Luck for which Bert Seymour himself has posed

A PECULIARITY of golf as compared with, say, football or cricket, is that the golfer plays his own game without any sort of interference from other players. A cricketer like Jack Hobbs might make a century in one innings and a duck in another. He has a whole field of eleven players against him, notably the bowler, who might beat him at any moment, perhaps with the very first ball he delivers, either scattering his wicket or getting him caught out.

A great footballer may be so pressed and closely watched by the opposing side that he fails to score a goal in a succession of matches. Of course, as a rule, he will do well and prove his supremacy.

GOLFER INDEPENDENT OF OTHER PLAYERS.

With the golfer it is different. Every time he stands up to the ball, whether on the tee or any part of the course, it lies in a stationary position in front of him. His

caddie carries a bagful of clubs that are supposed to be perfectly adapted to the making of any possible kind of shot, whether the ball lies "looking at him" on the fair way, or doing its best to hide from him in the rough or in the bunkers.

Those of us who play golf for a living are in a very different class from those of you who play the game for fun and the good it does you. We are constantly striving for distinction, to win some great tournament or competition which will advance our professional interests.

Comparatively young golfers like myself fully realise how much it would mean to us to win an open championship. The chances exist for all of us, but there is a sense in which our golf deteriorates by reason of this very ambition. We do not play so well on these great occasions as we play when there is nothing at stake, which leads me to say that the best golf is played when the strain of it is not felt. In other words, our only hope is to play our own game at all times.

AMATEUR'S ADVANTAGES.

This should be easier for you than it is for us, but you know very well that a competition has much the same disastrous effects upon your game as on ours. That is why so many of you say that you cannot play with a card, when every stroke is registered.

It is emphatically true of golf that those who play their own game achieve the best results, assuming, of course, that they have some fairly advanced knowledge of the game. There is a stage at which "playing your own game" would be a meaningless phrase—that is, when you have no game to play, but are only a beginner.

Let it be assumed, however, that you have reached the stage when professionals cannot tell you any more. You know how each shot should be played—you have played them correctly many times—so that it now rests with yourself to produce your best game fairly consistently.

THE NATURAL STYLE.

Many golfers retard their progress through trying too much. They imitate a variety of players greater than themselves, until their style becomes a miscellaneous embodiment of bits of other men's styles. This sort of thing is fatal, and its stupidity should be obvious at a glance. I am not trying to dissuade you from learning as you go along, watching this man and that man who, is

acknowledged to be a great player. What I am insisting upon rather is that you should advance by slow and sure degrees along the lines that come naturally to you. Your own game should be fairly developed for all it is worth before you begin to graft upon it points that have been observed in watching exhibition matches or more strenuous competitions by professionals.

Suppose your handicap to be anything from six to sixteen. It should be easier to come down from sixteen than from six, just as it would be easier for a foot-runner to take a second off his time in a quarter of a mile race than it would be to effect the same reduction in a short race.

But in either of these instances it still remains true that the only way to improve your golf is to play your own game. Whatever that game may be, the possibilities of improvement are always very considerable. I am constantly impressing this upon pupils, and I have a very hard task in prevailing upon them to admit the force of it.

KNOW YOUR CAPABILITIES.

Suppose your chief ambition is to increase your length from the tee. That, I think, will be found to be the desire of all golfers, excepting those few who lament their inability to do anything more than drive long balls. If your tee shots are consistently so short as to make your second shots difficult and dangerous, you are justified in trying to gain some more length.

Well, if you wish to save yourself months or years of disappointment, you will fall back on "playing your own game." I have known golfers so determined to do this that they have deliberately turned their heads away when an opponent has been taking his drive, lest they should be depressed by the length of it or tempted to copy the long driver's swing. The hardest lesson in all golf is to learn what your own natural style is capable of, and to make the most of it without stress and striving.

A round of golf is a long journey. On the average it occupies two hours, and the golfer who can play well within himself is most likely to last well to the end. He may lose a few holes at the start, but nothing is more certain than that he will overtake an opponent who is over-exerting himself.

Golfers I knew eight or ten years ago, to whom I used to speak in this way, still come to me disconsolately, saying that they cannot stop making experiments, and that they neither know why they are doing wrong

nor why they are doing right. In short, they have lost themselves, and lost their game. It is positively pathetic to find men who commenced golf when they were older than I am now, expecting to drive as far as I can, when there is no possibility of their doing so, and no great reason why they should. If they would play their own game, the margin

be eradicated. Keeping this in mind, the professional generally tries to adapt his instruction to the pupil's natural capabilities.

One man may come along much faster than another of his own age, but there should not be much difference between them in the end if each has played his own game and conscientiously developed whatever natural aptitude he began with. Even where there appears to be little natural aptitude, this lack can be made up for to a very large extent if only the principle is observed of playing your own game. You know quite well what this means. You have played your own game many times with the most gratifying result, and you have completely upset your game by trying to play like someone else built on entirely different lines from yourself.

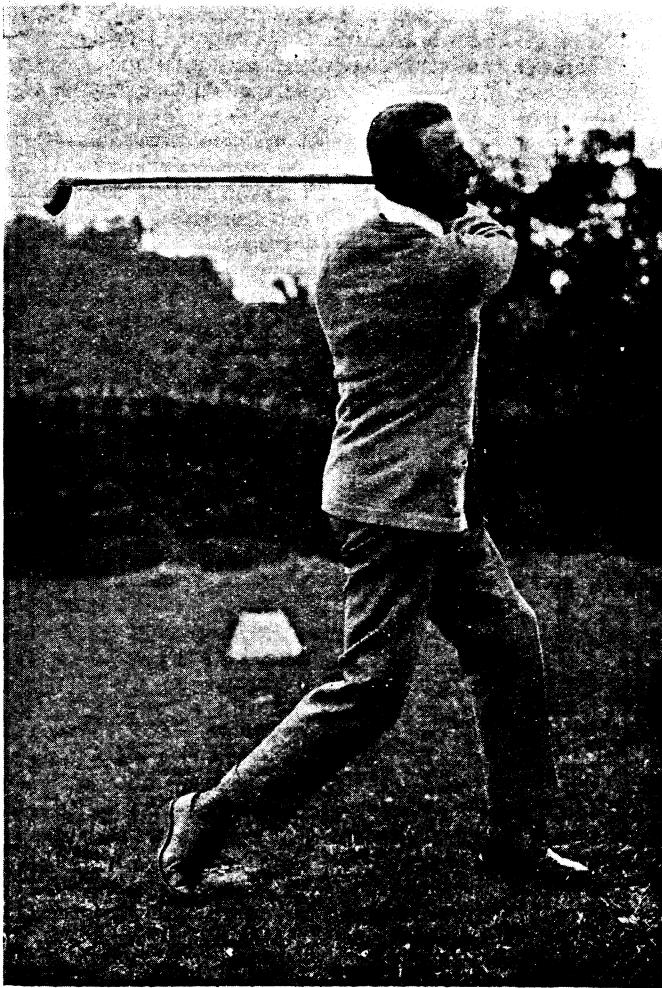
Some men will expend twice as much energy in driving a ball two hundred yards as others who seem to do everything so easily. Suppose players of the last-mentioned class were to bite their lips and "let blaze" with all their might, what would happen? The contrary of what they expected. One thing or another would certainly go wrong.

GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT.

I am not advocating absolute contentment with everything about your own game. My object is rather to encourage the belief that your own game is the best game for you, and that you should quietly resolve to

improve the style that comes easiest to you. You cannot all be Harry Vardons, Abe Mitchells, or George Duncans or Ted Rays, but you can break your golf to pieces by cherishing hopeless ambitions.

After all, I take it that you wish to eliminate from your golf those painful experiences when, as the saying goes, you "cannot hit a ball." If I were an amateur,



IDEAL FINISH OF SWING WITH DRIVE. BOTH KNEES BEND TO PERMIT A FREE FOLLOW-THROUGH OF RIGHT SHOULDER.

between theirs and mine would very soon be narrowed, but so long as they press to keep up sides with me, they are beaten, not so much by me as by themselves.

ADAPTING NATURAL CAPABILITIES.

It is a curious fact that no matter how much tuition the majority of golfers may have, their natural peculiarities can never

who went to the City every day, or were otherwise occupied earning a living, I should try to play golf so that every round should be a delight instead of, as in too many cases, a source of nervous exhaustion.

THE MIND IN GOLF.

A good deal has been written lately about the psychology of golf. I suppose that means the mind in golf. You have all heard of the caddie who told a celebrated author that "he might be able to write books, but it took a man with a head to play golf." So it does. But what sort of a head? That is the problem. I think the best brand of brains for golf is found in the man who believes in himself and plays his own game. He may go at intervals to a professional for a hint or two, which he can graft on to his own style with profit. But this type of golfer will know his limitations sufficiently well not to be carried away with the idea that he can play better golf in imitation of someone else than he can by developing his own game.

The best golfers are very reluctant to throw out suggestions to inferior players, unless it be in the way of encouraging them. "Don't mind my length," they will say to a short driver who is receiving strokes. "Just keep a straight ball, and length will come in time."

OVER-KEENNESS.

Golfers have come to me a day or two before a competition, asking what they should do to make a good show. If they did not actually ask this, I knew that that was what they were driving at. "Play your own game; don't try too much," is the sort of reply I generally make in these cases, when, of course, I know that the persons in question have quite a good game in them.

Alas, how often the story is told, on their return, that they played anything but their own game, and were ashamed to put their cards in! What can a professional do in such cases? I am afraid the onus lies with the golfer. He must discipline himself to overcome whatever form of excitement it is that militates against the playing of his own game when he is contending with a field of competitors. The man who can always do this will very soon rank with the best players in his club.

I had almost mentioned temperament here, but I don't want that word to have a

place in this article. I don't like it, and the sooner it is forgotten, the better for the game of golf. It is a hopeless sort of word—a bad excuse at any time for a poor performance.

I recall a summer evening's game on a London course, when three other professionals, myself and an amateur, played a five-ball match, each against each. The amateur was a ten man, with no thought in his head of playing any game but his own—a very nice game, too, although he was ten or fifteen years older than any of the professionals.

The bogies of the first five holes were 5, 4, 6, 3, 5. The amateur won every hole against each of us, even without the strokes we gave him. His score read 3, 3, 4, 2, 3. He might have played the whole Professional Golfers Association and beaten them with a score like that. He went on playing his own game as if nothing unusual had happened, and none of us was able to catch him, however hard we tried. He made no special exertion to maintain his lead, but went on merrily enjoying the game. We tried to ruffle him by the usual chaffing method, but you might as well have tried to flurry a statue in the street. None of us played more correct golf than he, though we out-drove him by 50 or 60 yards. I have often thought of that 10-handicap player as the best example I ever encountered of a man who played his own game in the certain knowledge that it was the best thing for him to do.

PERSISTENCY.

The person who plays his own game is usually a "sticker." He never knows when he is beaten, and an opponent is very apt to think he has got him when the opposite proves to be the case. Persistency and consistency such as he shows would be impossible in a player who tried all manner of experiments with other men's styles during a match.

Golf is a game of slight mistakes and serious consequences. The ball and the face of the club are so small that every shot must be exactly played to ensure the best results. For example, if you hit the ball with the toe or the heel of the driver, the shot will either be pulled, sliced, or otherwise ruined. A little thought on your part will make it evident that power wrongly applied only adds to your dismay, as the further a badly hit ball travels, the more trouble it will find.

AVOIDING DIFFICULTIES.

Suppose you are playing a match against an opponent who has the reputation of being a long driver. You acknowledge to yourself that it would be hopeless for you to attempt to out-distance him. This long driver, however, is very capable of driving wildly, not once or twice, but several times in a round. You may be playing off the same handicap as he does, or you may be in receipt of a few strokes. In a match of this description your plan of campaign will be that of maintaining a good line, contriving to counterbalance inequalities of length by leaving yourself nothing difficult to do, beyond the matter of judging your distances according to your capacity.

VALUE OF GOOD SHORT APPROACH SHOTS.

If you can play your own game without being disturbed by the opponent's length, I should say your chances of winning are at least equal to his. No matter how great is the margin between his best drives and yours, there are many possibilities between the drive and the other shots to the hole. A short driver who can keep a good line must frankly own to himself that his chances lie with the approach shots, the little chips up to the pin—not merely to the green—and the putts.

Nothing is more calculated to flurry a long hitter than the deadly accuracy of an

opponent he consistently out-drives. Herein lies the great charm of golf and the real secret of the fascination it exercises over all classes of players.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPONENT'S MISTAKES.

Sometimes we speak of golf as a selfish game. So it is, but not in any objectionable sense. It is only selfish to the extent that the player must concentrate upon his own game, taking little notice of an opponent's game, except to avail himself of every advantage of the other's mistakes or misfortunes. Is it not so in other games, such as billiards or cricket? Do we mean "Hard luck, old chap!" every time that phrase trips off the tongue? Are we not secretly pleased with every chance an opponent places in our way?

When an opponent at billiards makes a bad stroke and leaves the balls in fine scoring position, is it selfishness on the part of the other player to thank his stars and to seek to make a break? When a bowler at cricket sees the batsman off his guard in any way whatever, and promptly gets him out leg before wicket, or when a fielder or wicket-keeper sees the batsman to be out of his ground, and tips the balls off with the ball, are these things to be classed as selfishness? Of course not. So in golf there must be no bestowing of sympathy while the game lasts. Time enough for that at the nineteenth hole.

A ROMAN LANDING-PLACE.

HARSH in the rocking surge and soaring blast,
To sea the causeway stretches, patient, bare,
Gull-haunted, and unyielding everywhere;
And seaward juts, beyond the causeway cast,
A landing-place of stone, grown one at last
With the live rock, so long time builded there,
Washed of the waves and of the stormy air,
The writhing weed within its crannies fast.

Romans were they, of Roman heart and will—
Blithe-souled as we whom restless time devours—
The landing-place who builded. Yea, and still
Shine on the windy head the English flowers:
Those caves the Romans knew at spring tide fill,
Their labour stands, and their old joy is ours.

ERIC CHILMAN.



"'Looking for somebody, lass?' he inquired. 'Nobody special,' she answered. 'Isn't that Andrew Tyson, wi' his lang legs?'"

HER DAY

By OSWALD WILDRIDGE

ILLUSTRATED BY HUTTON MITCHELL

AT first she was inclined to be offended with the day because it was so very much like all the other days. All its circumstance, every one of its embroideries, were the same; it was flushed by familiar colours, demanded the ordinary round, the grinding, commonplace duties, when every note should have echoed the triumphant chords that throbbed in her own breast, when all its lights should have flared as those that toned her own vision. But then she had been living in a land of unreality ever since that terrific moment when, as she sat behind her spread of butter, eggs, and, dressed-chickens in the old-fashioned market hall and compared herself with some of the women-folk of the town, the oppression of the years surged up into rebellion, articulate, resolute rebellion. Even now that she had progressed to the day marked out for the open proclamation of her revolt she was thrilled anew by the audacity of that fiercely whispered decision: "I'm going to make a change."

In this, although she was not sufficiently

learned to recognise the fact, she breathed the very spirit of rebellion—to make a change, to burst the bonds that enslaved her, to institute a new order. Yet the rebellion was admirably concealed; none of its marks did she outwardly carry, flaunted none of its symbols. As she stood there in the trellis porch of Crag End on this glowing Sabbath morning, Jane Mallinson's face was placid as the mountains that backed and flanked her home, and not nearly so stern. Wayfarers passing by her garden gate would have beheld a very ordinary farm-wife, whose lot was cast in one of the solitary places, a house-proud body without a doubt; the well-scrubbed path, the whitened steps and window-sills, the blinds and curtains, her gingham gown and sun-bonnet, might all be taken as earnest of the immaculate purity that reigned within those blue-slate walls. Here indeed were the signs of one of those houses to which no higher tribute can be paid than the assurance that "you could eat a meal off the floor."

Not often did she grant herself as now the luxury of the idle moment, but this was her own special day, the day of much contriving and many dreams. Somehow it seemed to be all dream, too good to be true. At this very moment, her work-scarred hands hanging by her side, herself framed by crimson roses and bathed in the delicate lights that follow in the wake of dawn, her thoughts were far away. She was living in a land that belonged to other people, a country whose unaccustomed paths she fain would tread.

This was surely destined to be the longest day she had ever gone through. Although the sun was yet on the other side of Scawfell, the hour young enough to find town-folk still in their beds, she felt that she had been about for ages, and not until the clearing of the tea-things could she pass to the active fulfilment of her plan. All that she might do in the meantime was to tread through the ordinary round, and now and again steal a few moments from her abounding tasks to creep upstairs for a peep at that treasure lying so snug and wicked-looking in the bottom drawer of the tall mahogany chest.

And no one knew. In one sweeping glance she encompassed the little group of farms between the Hause and the Twin Hamlets beyond the silver spear of Birker Force, and smiled as she whispered the reminder that none of the folks would know anything about it until evening fell and the mellow chime of the far-off bells rang out their call to church. Until then the secret was her own.

Going home from Bransty market on that other unforgettable day wherein decision was converted into action, uplifted by the wonder of her venture, tired out by its strange labours, she was moved to laughter when the garrulous man in the far corner of the railway carriage portentously repeated that foolish heresy that "No woman can ever keep a secret." But none of the others knew that she was laughing, or suspected the scorching bitterness of her thoughts. All they saw was a rather angular woman, her thin lips tightly set, face expressionless, dress hopelessly out of date, dingy and threadbare, just a very indifferent sort of woman who stolidly watched the moving panorama from the window, and presently left them to join the little railway that runs from the coast into the heart of the hills.

Yet, for all her indifference, not a word spoken in that crowded coach did she miss,

and her heart was filled with mocking laughter. "Can't keep a secret!" she thought. "I wonder what sort of women he's been brought up among? Must all be like Anne Dawson of Byerthwaite, with her tongue like a bell-clapper. But not me. I've been keeping secrets all my life."

Her life! What a thing! She knew now why this day was so wonderful. It was enriched by contrast. Ever since she came to live at Crag End the dowry of definite days had been slipping away. There was nothing detached, only a ponderous mass, one day exactly the same as the day before, the weeks no different, nor the years. The same tasks, the same meals, the same voices. Bed and work. All without rhyme or reason.

Drift! That was the comprehending word. Five letters summing up the endeavour of years. Drift! In her own clumsy, untutored fashion she wondered if that was the explanation of other lives. Most likely. Indeed, now that within the limited range of her intellectual power she came to sift the problem, she could detect very little evidence of design in the lives of the handful of people who made up her world. Only there was not the same stagnation. Even Drunken Kit, he was one of the drifters. She was sure that his bestiality was not the product of a deliberate plan, but at least he got some return. It was not all waste. By the very lowest reckoning he could boast the spice of variety. You never could tell what he would be up to next. That was part of the indictment, and Kit could afford to laugh at it. Her life was enriched by no such grace. She worked by fixed rule. She was rarely in doubt as to what she would be up to next. Could tell most of her movements days beforehand. She was like a clock, like a railway time-table. Had no individuality. She was known as Jane Mallinson, but she was not Jane Mallinson. She was only the wife of Robert Mallinson, the man who had lost touch with the things that mattered most. He bought sheep and sold them; turned them on to their mountain heafs and gathered them into the lower folds; also he milked his cattle, made hay, sheared sheep, sold fleeces, worked like a slave and slept like a log.

And she, Jane Mallinson? A clock. When she died he would miss the labour more than he would miss the wife. A machine. She rose at five—sometimes in the summer at three—cooked his breakfast, shared it with

him, mostly in silence—a woman couldn't always be talking sheep; she helped with the milking, fed the calves, made the butter; at haytime cooked on a more lavish scale and carried the baskets out to the meadows; at clipping time she went through the same course, but without the opportunity of sharing in any of the merry-making; scrubbed floors, polished pots and pans, patched worn-out garments, darned socks, chopped wood, made most of the dinner, tea, supper, washed more crockery, and once a week sat with the rest of the farm-wives at the seat of custom in the market hall at Bransty. For reward she was allowed a place at her husband's table, a seat by his side on the few occasions that he went to church, and was housed, fed and clothed—clothed like no other woman in the dale. Even Susan Finch, the rector's maid—impertinent hussy!—turned up her nose at her. But Robert Mallinson did not see it. That was what he had drifted to. Sheep and cattle, buying and selling, scraping and pinching for his great design—the purchase of his farm.

She could see now that she ought to have put her foot down at the start, but she was carried away by the project as completely as he was. She had always been ambitious, inspired by a desire to rise in the world. It was ambition—one of her blunders—that led her from the country to domestic service in the towns, and when Robert brought her back to be mistress of Crag End, she plumed herself on having advanced in the scale. And the prospect of possession made a strong appeal, quite dazzled her; she construed it as possibly the first step towards things of which she hardly dared to whisper even to herself. But what a price the plan had exacted! Of the two, she alone was able to appreciate it in all its fullness. Money! That was only a trifling part. It was everything—comfort, content, rest, the joy of giving, life's lighter graces—all were swallowed up in the general surrender. Though it was not all done at once. Just a few fairly reasonable economies at the start, enough to implant the sense of virtue without the acute stings of martyrdom. But when the War came it brought the real thing. With so many of the men taken for the Army and the girls lured away to the munition works, it was speedily demonstrated by those left behind how vast were the possibilities of one pair of hands. She would not have believed it without the test of experience. Of course

Robert and she were both reduced to a state of slavery, but what they expended in labour they saved in wages; "doing without" involved many pains, but there was abundant compensation. And when the chance was offered, Robert Mallinson refused to go back to the old system. What was good for war-time was equally right for the days of peace. Others relaxed the rule, but not the master of Crag End, and the man and his house had become bywords for parsimony and drudgery.

Now he was wedded to the life, past praying for; and most loyally had she backed him up. But there was a limit, and before the sun went down she meant to strike off the first of her fetters. She was going to be like other women. Better still, she was going to be unlike some of them. She would show them, the gossiping busy-bodies, scorning her for her servitude and its marks.

Two o'clock. At five she would tear off her badge. Three hours to go. By six o'clock she would have entered the kingdom of her dreams from which she had been so wantonly debarred. Four hours. A trifle. Already she basked in the dawn-light of the Promised Land, was thrilled by that sense of satisfaction which greets the realisation of a hope long cherished. Yet, with it all, she was uneasily conscious of fear, shrank from her own daring, wondered whether she were attempting something beyond her power, and also whether, in spite of the great provocation, she might be guilty of wrong-doing. In her quest of assurance she went over the Commandments to satisfy herself that she had left each of them unbroken.

Thus she made her pilgrimage to that momentous hour. Five o'clock. The tea-things washed and put away, the hearth swept up, the fire banked, and her simple toilet at the back-kitchen slopstone completed, she went out to the porch to make sure that her man was still overlooking his lambs in the Three Acre pasture, and afterwards passed upstairs to her room. A very old room and very quaint, with ceiling sloped to the window, oak-beamed, and drinking in its light through diamond panes. She cared more for this room than she knew, but at present it occupied no place in her thoughts. Only her adventure, though now that the hour had really arrived she was strangely reluctant to meet it with action.

First of all, kneeling down upon the

floor, she again opened that bottom drawer, fumbled carefully in its depths, and emerged with her new dress, carrying it tenderly, caressingly, as she might have carried the child it had never been hers to encircle with her arms and enshrine in her heart. It might have been something human by the gentleness with which she laid it on the bed, patting it here and there to straighten out the creases.

Concentration exacting its usual penalty, she lost the greater in the less. Intent on the dress, she failed to behold its startling clash with the room, remained blind also to her own transformation. Light glowed in her eyes, her expressionless face was charged with power. Before she robed herself, that dress created a new woman, wiped out of her account a bunch of ponderous years. By its charm it restored a long-lost past; now it was clearly proclaimed that once upon a time she must have been a comely maid.

About the business of dressing she was no stranger, though awkward from lack of practice. Her first movements were significantly deliberate. There was no rushing into her new gown. She lingered over the task, was not going to spoil it by unnecessary haste. Not one second of the joy would she willingly sacrifice. As much as possible, too, she declined the ministry of the mirror, though the refusal was not absolute; an occasional glance she found it impossible to resist. But this was very swift and subtle. "Out of the corner of her eye" she would have termed it, only enough to help her on her way. When it came to the end she meant the vision to have the full reward of surprise.

Her mind was wonderfully busy during the operation, as busy as her fingers and not half so clumsy. With amazing agility it sprang from one theme to another, ranged about among the years, leaping from her maiden time to the present and back at a bound to her girlhood. Yet all her thoughts were concerned with dress. Those frocks she wore in her short-skirt days, her white for the Sunday-school sermons, her wedding-dress—grey silk with white lace—on which Robert pronounced a satisfying benediction. He had "never seen her so bonny," and all the time of his speech his eyes were fixed on her face.

Curiosity also swept upon her with flood force. She was stormed by conjecture. It was a case of "I wonder this" and "I wonder that." What would Robert say? He was certain to be angry, perhaps brutally so. But she did not care. She had got

beyond the caring stage. Rather was she amused as she pictured his astonishment when she passed into his presence tricked out in her finery, for all the world as smart as any of those town ladies on whom she had modelled her ambition. And he was not without sense; he would grasp her meaning, realise that she meant to make a change. His face—that would be the first part of her triumph. For the second, there would be the revelation of how she had managed to find the money, all scrapings from her attenuated housekeeping allowance and the extra pickings of her market-day dealings. Those war-time prices had come in very handy. But he would have to wait until she returned from church for the full story of her cleverness in smuggling the things into the house unseen and unsuspected.

Her crowning stroke would come when she walked down the aisle and took her place once more in the sadly neglected pew. She was sure that most of the folks would fail to recognise her at first. Stare? They would never take their eyes off her. And afterwards, the torrent of talk all through the dale, at every fireside. The rector was going to have an irresistible rival. For once she was going to play the part of sermon spoiler; it would be as much as the bargain if any of them even remembered the text.

There was something very alluring about a secret, and it was odd how preservation might hang on a trifle. This one depended entirely on the shaping of feminine fashions. Lucky for her that gowns fastened up the front now instead of the back, like that old dark-blue poplin of which she thought so much. Back buttons would have demanded assistance; she must have called either her husband or old Dinah Scott, her ancient maid, to lend a hand, and so her secret would have had no chance. The task was quite awkward enough with these new-fangled fasteners. Fashions had altered so completely since her last new dress, and a woman could not afford to lose touch if she were to keep her hand in. Anyhow, that was the last of the troublesome contraptions. Now for the hat and gloves, and then the old wardrobe mirror.

Of that dramatic appeal to the glass she was tremendously proud, regarded it as her most triumphant whim. Bent on astonishing the world, she herself would have the first feast. And now her day converged upon its supreme moment

On her skirt she bestowed a final shake, complacently settled the hang of the sleeves, with extreme care placed her hat upon her head, pressed afresh each finger of her new suede gloves, and then, swinging around, demanded the verdict of that long sheet of silvered glass.

the thought that her neighbours would not know her. But she had achieved much more than that; so absolute was the transformation that she did not recognise herself. This woman confronting her was a stranger. Here was no farmer's wife dressed for church in her Sunday best, but one of the town quality smartly gowned in cornflower blue, and upon her head a hat of black velvet, broad-brimmed and coquettishly turned up at the side. A new woman, her face aglow with life, her pale cheeks daintily flushed. "Sakes," she murmured, "but it can't be me! It's another body. It isn't a bit like."

Her face rounded in smiling approval, she made a closer survey, found nothing to affront, everything to please. "I'm a lady," she thought, "as fit as the best. Who'd ever take me for a farm-woman now? My, but dress does make a difference! I reckon it'd be the same with anybody. Only—I—it's—"

She tried again. "Only..." but got no further. There was something wrong. Something had gone out of the day, its

brilliance was unaccountably dimmed. In frowning perplexity she renewed her inspection of that mirrored figure, stared and kept on staring, and in the middle of it all her vision slowly began to include her environment, she awoke to that fragment of



"So absolute was the transformation that she did not recognise herself. This woman confronting her was a stranger."

The surprise was complete, far exceeding all that her wildest fancy had ever contemplated. At once it was satisfying and devastating. Over and over again, from the moment she crept from her bed to plunge into that wonderful day, had she exulted in

the room framed in the glass in company with herself. And nothing more did she require. Turning about, she gathered up all the rest in one searching glance—the old-fashioned furniture, worn rugs, uncovered boards, cheap pictures, the stark bareness—then glanced again at her own reflection and found the contrast overpowering. She did not fit, was out of place. She beheld herself as a blot on an unspotted page. Having rioted for weeks in a world of unreality, she was thrust up against solid, undeniable fact. This woman against that setting.

Although months had been spent on her plotting, her plans were routed in a bunch of seconds. Before she began to move about approval dissolved in disgust. A stranger? Yes. No need to go to church for that. These garments made a stranger of her in her own house, here in the sanctity of her own room. She did not belong to it. And this was the penalty that would be imposed outside. She would be outlawed. And her husband would lead the attack. One of her secret hopes had been that she would lure him away from his barren course, uplift him, make him more self-respecting, induce him by her example to a better habit; but now, as she was attired, Robert Mallinson would not cross the doorstep in her company, would not be seen out of doors with her. Angry! He would be worse than angry. He would blast her with contempt.

Six o'clock. The brooding silence of the foothills was gently broken. Through the open lattice window the mellow peal of the distant bells winged its way into that room of a shattered dream. Once more Jane Mallinson took counsel with her mirror. Should she risk it? That passage of the aisle to her pew? Through that avenue of staring eyes? Already she felt them. She was pierced by them. Staring eyes everywhere, and not the tribute of envy or of admiration in a single pair. She felt herself riddled by their mockery, stabbed by ribald tongues. "A daw in peacock's feathers!" That was the condemnation.

"I'd be fair shamed." Her parched lips whispered it, and the judgment stood. "I could never face them. The laughing things! I'd be proper shamed."

Accepting her defeat, she began reluctantly to shed her plumes. Slowly the gloves were withdrawn from her fingers, the hat-pins from the hair, all the deliberation of her dressing being repeated until, as she lifted the hat from her head, the sound of voices blended with the chiming of the bells, whereupon panic seized her. Not on any terms would she be seen tricked out in this finery. The hat, so revered, was roughly tossed upon the bed; frantic fingers tore at the fastenings of her dress, and, without waiting to robe herself afresh, she thrust the lot untidily back into the bottom drawer. Only when they were hidden from sight did she relax, recover once more the semblance of the sedate farm-wife. Not so easily, however, are the marks of conflict banished, and this she discovered when with reluctant steps she descended again to her kitchen and then passed out to the porch, where, shading her eyes against the westerling sun, she stared searchingly down the dale. From the far side of the croft her husband strolled across to her side.

"Looking for somebody, lass?" he inquired.

"Nobody special," she answered. "Isn't that Andrew Tyson, wi' his lang legs?"

"Ay, it's Andrew sure enough. He just stopped for a word on his way to church." A pause, and then: "What have you been doing wi' yoursel'? You look flustered."

This time she would fain have made a shake of the head do the work of words, but Robert Mallinson pressed the question, and there was no escape. "Well," she confessed, and as she spoke she plucked from the crimson rambler by her side a cluster of withered blooms, "mebbe I do feel a bit flustered. But it is nothing. I've just been upstairs trying on a few bit things I bought at Bransty last market day, and—they don't fit."





THE MIND OF MAN

By WILFRID THORLEY

THE mind of man is like a lake,
The wrath of man is like a breeze
That ruffles the still pool to make
A mock of all he sees.



Lilies that float and swans that steer
Are lovely things, but who can know
How this may be when on the mere
The sudden tempests blow?



No lily then shall he discern
Upon the pool but blurred in mist,
And every wave that leaps shall turn
The proud swan's parodist.



And not till calm from brim to brim
Hold once again the mind of man
Shall beauty clear come back to him,
In lily or in swan.

REFLECTED GLORY

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

NICK said, swinging a booted leg free of the stirrup and looking at the girl who leant on the verandah rail:

"Great news, Pen! Stephen's coming home!"

The girl, slender and young in a little plain pink linen frock and hatless to the hot sun, that made burnished bronze of her hair, returned the look with one of such frank enthusiasm that you might at once have concluded that "Stephen" was very important or very nice—or perhaps both. The thing is possible.

"Of course, he won't be back for a fortnight," Stephen's brother went on. "But I had to come and tell you. And, besides"—he paused, looped the black horse's bridle over a staple in the verandah post, and in two strides was beside her—"I wanted to know just when you will marry me," he said.

Penelope put her hands behind her back, looked at him with dancing eyes, and said demurely:

"Oh, when I've got tired of refusing you, I suppose. Will that do?"

He laid his riding-crop down on the wicker table and put his hands on her slim shoulders. There was an odd, slow sureness in his movements that made her look at him quickly, the laughter still flickering in her grey eyes.

"You're awfully serious, Nick! And you're breaking our compact. You asked me last week, and you know you agreed that once a fortnight—" She broke off. "Anyone would think you wanted me to marry you before Stephen comes home."

"Yes, I do," said Nick quietly.

"Oh!" In spite of her light-hearted gaiety she could not keep that little startled ring out of her voice, for she was genuinely amazed. Stephen Amory, who had achieved a double greatness—as Major Amory, V.C., for a deed conspicuous in its gallantry when gallant deeds were many; as Amory, the great engineer, whose bridges had been built at the ends of the earth—surely it

was unthinkable that there could be an Amory wedding without his presence! Of course Nick couldn't really mean it. She gave a little laugh.

"I'll marry you," she said, and she said it as lightly and gaily as if she spoke of a ride or a dance or a tramp across the moors. "But of course Stephen must be there. Nick, darling, don't be absurd!"

Nick, darling, looking down into her upturned face, smiled. The smile made his face oddly—almost startlingly—different, and, contrary to the effect of most smiles on most faces, older. For it was not a boyish smile, but held a sort of grave protectiveness that Penelope, confident and gay, never noticed at all. For a long moment he said nothing. Then, very gently:

"It matters—so much, Pen?"

She drew away with an odd little sense of impatience that she did not herself understand.

"Oh, Nick, surely! It's only three weeks—and he's your brother—and everyone—" She broke off short. And when Nick laughed with sudden and genuine good-humour, she was relieved.

"All right, I'll wait. But it isn't everyone's affair, all the same, Pen. It's ours."

Wherein he was no doubt correct. Nevertheless, "everyone" took a very great interest in the wedding of Penelope Constable to Nick Amory, the brother of "the" Amory, V.C., you know, who had just completed a wonderful piece of engineering in South America—in fact, one of the scientific triumphs of the age.

"The" Amory would be home in time for the wedding—probably he would be Nick's best man; that fact alone, it appeared, would mean that "everyone" would go. The affair promised to be the event of the month. There were several house-parties in the neighbourhood for the occasion. Stephen Amory's ship was due home on the first of June, and the wedding had been fixed for the eighth.

In fact, there was no doubt at all that it

was the brilliance of "the" Stephen Amory that lent a halo of glory to the otherwise quite ordinary affair. And of all who consciously or unconsciously held this point of view, the chief was Penelope herself.

Stephen Amory came home—a big, quiet man some fifteen years Nick's senior, and the neighbourhood welcomed him, figuratively at least, with laurel wreaths and chanting: "*Stephen Amory, whose brother Penelope Constable was going to marry.*"

So the realisation came to Nick, as he saw Penelope's laughing face, alight with pride—the pride of reflected glory.

The irony of it was that he knew he had no cause to be jealous in the conventional sense—that Penelope wasn't in the least likely to fall in love with Stephen. She would marry Nick—*Stephen Amory's brother*—and in that reflected glory he would have to be content.

He knew that he would not. But he also knew, being a simple soul who steered his course by a few large and simple ideas, that the most important thing was Penelope's happiness. And the question was, would the light of that reflected glory be of an enduring quality?

At which point in his reflections Nick swore that it should, and went quite cheerfully in search of Penelope, who was instilling into her chief bridesmaid, with entire success, the hero-worship due to Stephen Amory.

But the chief bridesmaid, although quite ready to be convinced that Stephen Amory was a hero, couldn't help wondering that he should so entirely fill the stage. For, after all, Pen was going to marry Nick, not Stephen—everyone had known for the last year that she would marry Nick in the end, and Nick was a dear—but it seemed *funny*, thought the chief bridesmaid in italics, that Pen should talk less of Nick than of Stephen.

Nick, of course, couldn't have been called wonderful. He was just a jolly good sort, and a thorough sportsman. There was no doubt of *that*.

* * * *

Nick married Penelope, and everyone was there. The chief bridesmaid, whose silver-leaf-wreathed head was level enough to record impressions, noted with approval that Stephen Amory derived no visible satisfaction from the hero-worship of which he could hardly be unconscious. He had a half-amused, half-indifferent manner

that somehow accentuated the impression of a sense of power, and contrasted inevitably with Nick's boyishness.

It was one of the many guests whom the chief bridesmaid did not know who saw Penelope for the first time and was frankly envious.

"At all events," the chief bridesmaid overheard him say to his companion, "it seems there's something in the saying 'unlucky in cards, lucky in love,' doesn't it?"

The other laughed rather cynically.

"Yes. I fancy the Amorys have always had that luck—perhaps to console them for lack of the other. Heaven knows, they could do with that as well, though—up to the present—what? But it's extraordinary how they stick to it—losing all the time and always believing they'll win in the end. They never do."

The first man, looking at Penelope across the crowded room, made no reply.

It was nearly three months later that the chief bridesmaid, the week-end guest of Nick and Penelope at the old Amory house in the South Down country, had occasion to recall that overheard fragment of conversation.

"My dear Diana," Penelope had said in tones of mock solemnity, "surely you know whose portrait that is? He's Nick's most distinguished three-greats-grandfather. He gambled away every penny of the Amory money, married an heiress, lost her fortune as well, accused a man of cheating and fought a duel for it, and was killed. His brother borrowed money and established a cloth factory, and retrieved the family fortunes. But nobody troubled to paint *his* portrait. He wasn't interesting enough, I suppose! He"—she nodded at the painted face that looked down at them with such an irresistibly boyish and happy-go-lucky expression—"he's awfully like Nick, isn't he? I told Nick he must have his portrait done by that awfully clever man who did Colonel Macrae's, but he says he can't afford it." She gave a little laugh that, half careless as it was, hid a definite resentment and vexation. "Nick says we've got to economise," she explained. "He's told me so three times during the last week—quite seriously. I'm sure I don't know why." And she frowned.

To Diana, looking at the portrait, came a sudden cold memory—

"*It's extraordinary the way they stick to it—losing all the time . . . and always*

believing they'll win in the end. But they never do."

Did it mean that Nick Amory shared other traits besides good looks with his "three-greats-grandfather"?

Least of all did Diana want to thrust suspicion into Penelope's mind, but the thought had been involuntary, and something in her half-frightened glance at the portrait betrayed it, for Penelope followed her look, and Diana saw her face suddenly whiten and then flush red, as if suspicion were followed by self-reproach.

She laughed again with a queer note of defiance, and changed the subject abruptly. Stephen Amory was expected that night—would Diana care to drive over to the junction with her to meet him? Diana acquiesced, and began to talk hurriedly of the Amory hero. Was it true that he had been offered a tremendously important contract in China—an affair to be entrusted to no one else?

Penelope nodded.

"Yes. He sails in November, I believe. He'll stay here on and off until then, but he has to be in Town a good deal."

But Diana noticed that she avoided looking at the portrait again.

After all, Stephen Amory did not come that evening. His telegram briefly declared that he had an unexpected engagement. Nick, when he heard of his brother's change of plans was obviously displeased—disproportionately so, Penelope thought. She reminded him, in a cold little voice, that Stephen had many claims on his time; it was the price of his fame, she added.

But Nick, crumpling the telegram in his hand and frowning, plainly did not accept this point of view. He said little, but throughout the evening his boyish face was worried and preoccupied. And Penelope, still hiding that growing sense of resentment with laughter, frankly deplored Stephen's enforced absence as being responsible for the "dullness" of Diana's last evening.

* * * * *

With the passing weeks life at the old house in the Downs grew subtly different. Nick sold two of his four horses and his car. Penelope accepted his explanation as to the need of economising in silence; when he let the shooting, she said, with a curious hardness in her pretty voice, that that of course didn't matter so much, as they'd planned to go abroad that winter.

Nick looked at her squarely.

"I'm awf'ly sorry, Pen, but—I'm afraid we can't do that—this year. After all, you know, it's quite jolly here in most winters. And there's the hounds. We might manage to get out with 'em now and again, if those two youngsters I've bought from Conway turn out all right."

She stared at him, almost forgetting the shock of the first part of his speech in amazement at the second.

"What do you mean—'now and again'—on the three-year-olds? What about Firefly and The Nun?"

He drew a deep breath.

"I've sold 'em. Conway took 'em for a man in the shires, at top price, and I got the youngsters for almost a sixth of it. They—they're promising pretty well. Pen"—his voice changed—"it had to be done. You know I'd never—"

Her laugh jarred, even to herself.

"Oh, I quite understand," she said, and went away.

She looked at the portrait over the mantel-shelf with clenched hands and stormy eyes, and the painted face looked back at her with a devil-may-care mockery. As she turned away her glance fell on a photograph of Stephen, and the contrast between the two faces struck her sharply: the one, that might have been Nick's own, carelessly good-humoured; the other, the face of a man of ability, purpose and strength.

Stephen had been more than ever in Town; when next he came to Sussex, she would—after all, he was Nick's brother, and ought to know.

But the climax came before Stephen Amory—one evening in November. Nick, facing Penelope across the hearth in the firelit hall, told her, with an odd, stiff diction quite new to him, that circumstances had forced him to let the house for a year or two.

"I've been lucky, anyway, in one thing. The tenants—they're Americans an' rollin' in dollars, of course—have agreed to our stayin' on for the time being, at the bailiff's cottage, and to my acting as steward. That's a help—jobs aren't easy to come by in a hurry."

Penelope stood quite still and looked at him. Firelight and moonlight came together across the room, touching the mellow beauty of it—the panelled walls and polished floor, the black oak table whereon stood a bowl of late autumn roses, delicate and frail—a perfect setting for the figure of the girl

herself, slender in a sleeveless frock of soft black lace, a deep blue ribbon on her russet hair.

So Nick saw her—adorable, and took a step towards her.

“Pen——”

Her voice checked him, very cold and quiet and deliberate.

“You mean that we can’t afford to live here any more? That in four months you’ve—gambled and lost to that extent? Oh, you think I don’t know——”

“It seems,” said Nick wryly, “that you do.” His face was white. “I’ve been a fool——”

“I’m glad you



“Better—oh, a thousand times better if ——” She broke off.

admit it! But it's worse than folly!" She flung out her hand towards the photograph of Stephen Amory in its place of honour beside the roses. "Have you thought of what it'll mean to *him*? At the height of his career—a career of responsibility and importance—and his brother's a gambler and spendthrift! No wonder he's not come here as he used to! It would have been better if he'd never come home at all—to be disgraced! And better—oh, a thousand times better if——" She broke off.

"If you had not married me," prompted Nick. His voice was so steadily matter-of-fact that the meaning of the words was for a moment blunted. For that moment they looked at one another; then, without

speaking, Penelope turned away and left him to the mockery, or sympathy, of a painted face.

* * * * *

She sent Stephen Amory a wire, and was on her way to Town at seven in the morning. It was the first time in all her life that she had felt the need of anyone stronger than herself. She had always been self-reliant, and she didn't know why it was that she couldn't think clearly now. She tried to think of Nick, and the result was a blur of anger and pain which she did not really understand. For she did not really know how much Nick had mattered.

Somehow the sight of Stephen didn't convey the sense of strength she had unconsciously expected. He waited for her to speak, and vaguely his manner held an odd apprehension new to it. She put that down to his knowledge of the whole hateful affair,



'If you had not married me,' prompted Nick.

his fear of hurting her by what he might say.

He took her outstretched hand and said at last:

"Penelope, I didn't think you'd come! You little brick! I don't deserve it. Nick's told you, of course."

She looked away.

"Partly, and partly I guessed."

Suddenly she felt a strange reluctance to discuss Nick's delinquencies with Nick's brother.

"Penelope, I swear to Heaven I'll make up to him. Only I never can—in gratitude. The thing's too big."

She swung round to him, suddenly breathless.

"What do you mean? What do you mean? What do you owe—to Nick?"

He stared at her.

"D'you mean that you don't know—that he hasn't told you? But you said he had."

She put her hand on a chair back, gripped it, and repeated her question.

"Stephen, what do you owe to Nick?"

"Everything! Everything in the world! Penelope, before I'd been a month in England I'd lost nearly all I had—gambling. In two I was head over heels in debt. I thought my luck would turn—it didn't. I went on—getting deeper in. I told Nick." Then he paused. "If it hadn't been for him, there'd have been the end of everything—for me. They'd just offered me the big Chinese contract. I couldn't have accepted it—but for Nick. As it is, I sail next week."

In the silence that followed, Penelope readjusted a shattered world, looking at Stephen with wide eyes that really did not see him at all. Out of the wreck of an idol

thrust from its niche, and a strong sword snapped in two, came a glad certainty that swept up the pieces and thrust them away.

Vaguely she was aware of wishing Stephen luck—Nick would have done that—and of explaining that she must get back to Sussex at once; of Stephen's putting her into the train at Charing Cross; of the first sight of the Downs looming against the clear grey sky; of getting back to Nick, who was busy with papers and accounts at the library desk—of her own voice, reaching across the room to him almost before the door had closed.

"Nick, I've been to Stephen. Why didn't you tell me? Why did you let me think all the time it was you?"

He got to his feet and looked at her without speaking, and suddenly, it seemed, she saw the strength behind the careless good-humour of his face.

"You said you'd been a fool," she said. "Wasn't that convicting yourself? Didn't you want me to know the truth?"

"No," he said simply.

"But—why?"

He looked at her squarely.

"You thought so much of Stephen. Lately"—he gave an odd, harsh laugh—"I'd come to think that you married me because of Stephen—I mean, you wouldn't have—if Stephen hadn't been my brother. I thought I could do with that—with having you on any terms. That's where I was a fool. I thought I could be satisfied—with reflected glory. I couldn't. And now that's gone—"

Penelope slipped across to him.

"There's the sunlight," she said, with a little laugh, "which is better!"





LITERALLY.

"I AM glad to see that my old friend Dr. Brown has put your daughter on her feet again."
 "Yes, you are quite right. We have just sold the car to pay his bill!"

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

A PUNCTURE.

By Amanda Bebbington.

KITTY has become quite a proficient driver. Her casualties have been few, and, contrary to my expectation, no bill of damages has yet been presented. The compression of the cream car is not enormous, and Kitty, who is by no means muscular, whips her little starting-handle over with the skill of an expert, while, so far, luck having been with her, no mechanical worries have been her portion.

I pass by the day when she had the misfortune to encounter a high-spirited puppy bursting from his domain at full speed and recking not of motor traffic. Poor little Fido's paw was rather badly damaged, and my tender-hearted motorist collapsed in a bundle on the roadside, and through her tears wailed her firm determination "not to drive the monster again."

In obedience to a telephone message I hastened to the spot, rescued the weeping damsel, set matters generally straight, and brought her home. That is past history.

I remarked curiously to her one day, as she was preparing to set forth: "What would you

do if you got a puncture? You'd never be able to get a wheel off."

"Shouldn't I?" queried Kitty thoughtfully. Then, with a brilliant smile: "Oh, I dare say I should manage somehow."

But one day last week Kitty roped me in for a garden-party. Reluctantly I tore myself from my latest hero, who had taken the bit between his teeth and was galloping headlong to perdition, donned my Sunday go-to-meeting clothes, and climbed into the cream-hued wonder.

About two miles on the road a sudden "Sheough!" proclaimed a deflated tyre. "A puncture!" I groaned. "Good Heavens, Kitty, whatever is to be done?"

I examined the spare wheel. Alas, luck had deserted us! The tube held a large tear.

"I shall have to put a new tube in this one on the car," I decided. My immaculate and carefully treasured grey trousers must kneel in the thick white dust of the country road. Imagine my coat after contact with that refractory non-skid!

One consolation remained. At least I should escape the garden-party. No woman would

want to present the scarecrow I should appear when the battle was won.

But Kitty steered the car deftly to the roadside, switched off her engine, and alighted calmly. "Don't worry, dear. I'll see to it," she soothed, proceeding to shed her dust-coat.

I surveyed her dainty, pale blue frock and her delicate hat, donned to meet the county. "You see to it?" I groaned. "In those clothes?"

Kitty smiled complacently. "Yes. Isn't it lucky I had them on?" she congratulated herself. "Now, Harold, open the tool-box, hand me the spare tube, a tyre lever, and the pump. Then you can light a cigar, disappear

The fair chauffeuse heard it, too. A pathetic figure in dainty draperies, with a helpless, appealing look, held a big pump in her hand, into which she was just inserting a fairy foot encased in the very latest thing in suede shoes. She stood right in the track of the oncoming motor.

It was like watching a cinema. I couldn't hear the voices, I only saw the pantomime. The big car drew up. Two hefty young men bowed before beauty in distress. Said beauty apparently very much surprised at their appearance. Explanations. Two competent young giants, one fair lady, one spare tube, pump and tyre lever to suit. Appropriate



THE LAST WORD.

ENTHUSIASTIC LADY: And what have you got in the basket?
KENNELMAN (fed up): 'Is bloomin' pedigree, lady.

down the road for half an hour, and when you return I'll have it done."

I stared. "Good Heavens, Kitty!" I gasped. "You don't know what you are taking on."

"Oh, yes, I do," she assured me. "You just obey orders."

I decided I would, wondering how long it would be before an S.O.S. arrived. But I hadn't yet fathomed the guile of Kitty.

I strolled leisurely down the winding road and, when at a safe distance, leapt a convenient gate and returned on the inside of the fence, to see how she got on. I had just got myself comfortably settled under a handy tree, when I heard the pant of an approaching car.

gestures, a smiling and grateful little owner, brief adieux, and then, as the big car panted out of sight, a clear voice exclaimed chidingly:

"You can come out now, Harold, but another time don't risk your cigar quite so near. You mightn't always be so lucky, you know."

I glared helplessly at Kitty as she drew her dust-coat over the pale blue splendours and resumed the driving seat.

"Madam," I began sternly, "what behaviour——"

Kitty leaned me out an encouraging hand. "Oh, come on, Harold!" she said. "All the strawberries will be gone before we get there."

GETTING MY DESERTS.

By Theta.

In my time I have had many pets, for, as father always said, one must do something to keep him from teasing the baby. I am familiar with the habits and customs of jumping beans and lop-eared rabbits. I can tell you all manner of details about pigs, whether of the guinea variety or those who made their money in the War, but until a recent week-end I had never been really well acquainted with an apple tree.

I had admired such things, of course, as part of a landscape. I had partaken of them as part of a simple fruitarian lunch, but, as I say, it was not until I went to stay with Brown that apple trees and I really made a study of one another.

Brown runs the sort of week-end cottage that reminds visitors of a shipwreck—it is always a case of all hands to the pumps there. The casual guest can always rely on not finding the time hang heavily on his hands. He may, if he is lucky, have the choice of a pick or a shovel as his companion during a restful week-end, but that is as much as he can hope for, except, of course, the meal times, which arrive at regular intervals.

When, therefore, Brown suggested that if I wanted a nice easy job (as if I ever wanted anything else!) I could pick the rest of his apples—which were late on the tree this year on account of a shortage of visitors—I agreed at once. It really did sound easy, and in due course I found myself with a basket, a ladder, and a parting injunction not to bruise more than I could help.

With the help of the ladder it was a simple enough matter to get into the fork of the tree, but after that the "nice and easiness" of the job became open to doubt. Jealous, possibly, of the undeserved honour conferred upon the particular branch up which I began to clamber towards the fruit, several others resented my

choice, and signified same in what I take it is the apple tree's usual manner. Three of them scratched me severely in the neck, two gave an exhibition of jazz drumming on my funny-bone, and the inevitable souvenir hunter that one finds in all companies did its best to annex a fragment of my ear.

It was warm work while it lasted, but I am not the man to be deterred by violence. I hung my basket on a convenient twig, and had



JUST TO MAKE SURE.

PHRENOLOGIST: Dear me! You have a most extraordinary and tenacious memory.

CLIENT: Do you mind putting that down on a piece of paper, so I shan't forget it?

half filled it before, under the increasing weight, the twig decided to down tools. Unhappily, the tools were mine, for, with its contents and a resounding crash, my basket descended to earth.

As an exhibition of not bruising more than I could help, it was not a success, especially when I considered how many my progress up and down the bough had shaken to the

ground in addition. And the worst of it is that you cannot bruise an apple where it does not show.

During my second ascent I cannot think that that apple tree really played the game as it should be played. Scratching on the neck I could have forgiven, for one can get a new neck if one's flesh heals quickly, but to tear a shirt that in its day had been universally esteemed the nuttiest thing outside Brazil, was another matter, with underwear at its present price.

That really did upset me. I admit that I

have been a great success "in the Great War, daddy."

"Are there *any* you haven't bruised?" he asked, after an examination of my stock.

"Oh, yes," I assured him.

"Where are they?" he demanded, with a sneer.

"In my pocket," I said, "and they're going to stop there, pending transfer to an adjacent portion of my anatomy."

But what I say is, hang a man who sets you to pick cooking apples without telling you about them.



EQUAL TO ANYTHING.

EMPLOYER (engaging new commercial traveller): Your predecessor left things in a fearful muddle I expect you will find some difficulty in getting order out of chaos.

NEW TRAVELLER: Leave 'im to me, sir. I don't know who Chaos is, but I'll keep at him until I *do* get an order out of him.

lost my temper at once when that occurred, though it is untrue to say, as Brown subsequently did, that I knocked the tree about. All I did was to shake it, and the result fully justified such disciplinary action. For it revealed how the gathering might be done with a minimum of labour. A few more shakes, and I was able to pick up from the ground as many basketfuls as I wished. I had quite a goodly store when Brown came along to inspect the fatigue party, but even then he was not satisfied. As an orderly officer Brown must

"I CAN'T understand how some people manage to keep their servants so long. Why, that old gentleman I was speaking to just now says he has had the same cook for thirty years!"

"Yes, I know; he married her."



THE ankle watch for ladies is spoken of as a new idea, but gentlemen have worn clocks on their socks for quite a long time.



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TINKER'S LIGHTS.

By Jessie Pope.

TINKER, the Starkies' cat, was far from popular with its own species, but the Starkie family adored it. Even Mr. Starkie—who ran to catch the 8.20 every morning, and plodded home at 7.15 every night—had a warm corner in his heart for the brindled depredator of local dustbins and chief chorister in midnight harmonies. Ill-shaped and dour-looking, with a crafty eye and particularly poor tail, the family had reared it from its innocent and captivating kittenhood, and when, now past its prime, Tinker developed symptoms of mange, the whole household grew anxious.

"I really think you ought to take Tinker to see the vet, chum," said Mrs. Starkie *sotto voce* to her husband. "I'm sure he will put him right, and I feel nervous about the children, if it's anything catching." Mr. Starkie felt likewise, and that evening, when the olive branches were fast asleep, he circumvented Tinker's usual nightout, deposited him, after some struggle, inside a hamper, and bore him away to our dumb friends' doctor.

The vet. looked grave and shook his head. "Chronic," he said. "Nothing can be done. If it's cured in one place, it will break out in another. But he's a very dangerous playmate for children. My advice is to have him put away at once."

Mr. Starkie winced at the verdict, but accepted the inevitable, and waited while the sentence was carried out—"off." Then he returned with the remains in the hamper, determined anyhow that poor Tinker should be decently buried in the back garden. His better half shed a few tears, but agreed it "was better

so," and promised to break the sad news in the morning to the olive branches.

Lighted by a bicycle lamp and armed with a spade, Mr. Starkie dug a deep and decent grave among the syringa bushes, performed the obsequies, and, replacing the turf, patted all down with neat precision.

Returning rather sadly through the kitchen,



FIGURATIVELY.

"How flat you are this evening, Henry!"

his glance fell on a bunch of lights, on the larder shelf, which had been purchased that morning to tempt the invalid's appetite.

"Bother!" said Mr. Starkie, for he was tired. But the weather seemed likely to continue close, and the lights must be hygienically disposed of. Once more taking the spade and the lamp, he returned to the garden, and, digging another hole at some distance from the

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first, deposited the lights within and shovelled back the earth in a rough but adequate heap.

Next morning he was in a greater hurry than usual to catch his 8.20, in order to avoid the painful scene which was bound to ensue when the olive branches realised their loss, and on his return home he was relieved to find the family, chastened indeed, yet almost cheerful with a new interest in life.

"Come and look, Daddy," they chorused, and led him into the garden, followed by a sad but satisfied Mrs. Starkie.

A little mound, covered with moss and an elaborate design in wild flowers, surrounded by two rows of carefully-chosen white stones, and with a scarlet geranium (purchased with money-box pennies) planted in the centre, marked the last resting-place of—not Tinker, but Tinker's lights.

TONSORIAL MUSIC.

(Hairdressing to music has been introduced into New York "beauty parlours.")

Oh, why, when I visit the barber's,
Should things be so solemn and glum?
And why can't they do a refreshing shampoo
To the sound of the trumpet and drum?

To be lathered in time to the music,
And scraped with a jubilant stave,
Or powdered and sprayed while the trombone
was played,

Would add a new joy to the shave.

I long for the time when the artist
Will sing, while he's cutting my hair,
Some popular strain with a lilting refrain,
And do a pas seul round the chair.



PERHAPS.

"AND how do you account for the fact that you have reached such a wonderful old age?"
"Well, zur, I s'pose it be because I was born so long ago."

"Isn't it *beautiful*, Daddy?" they cried with mournful enthusiasm.

For a moment Mr. Starkie was inarticulate, but he nodded, avoided his wife's eye, and, leading the comforted procession of mourners back to the house, kept his own counsel for ever.

"I THINK those tortoiseshell-rimmed spectacles give your daughter a very distinguished air, but I had no idea she was short-sighted."

"Oh, my dear, there are no glasses in them; they are only worn to keep the eyebrows arched."

These are difficult times and depressing,
So welcome a chance to be gay;
It will be a great boon to the toilet saloon
When the band never ceases to play.

R. H. Roberts.



"I CAME into this town, sir, as a very small boy, without a shoe to my feet or a penny in my pocket, and now look at me!"

"But I always thought you were born in the place."

"So I was. Doesn't that prove my statement?"



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THESE two girls made a test which anyone can make. They agreed to wash certain garments with two different soaps to find if there was any real difference between pure soap and soap of another kind.

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